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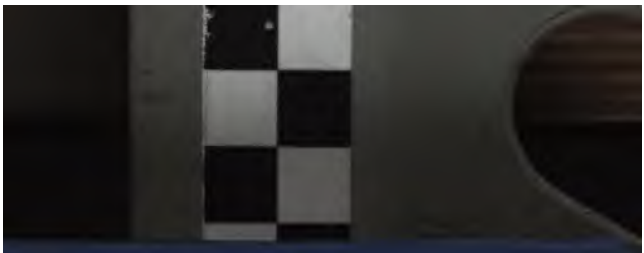

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THE

MOURTRAY FAMILY.

A Novel.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE

FAMILY

OF

MOURTRAY.

CHAP. I.

NOT one of the family of the Mourtray's could cloſe their eyes; the father, agonized by the certainty of his ſon's ſad conduct, tried in vain to ſuppreſs deep groans, that, at intervals, would force themſelves a paſſage out of his afflicted boſom.

His wife, who had really believed him indiſpoſed, when he appeared pale and trembling by her bedſide urging her to

 riſe,

riſe, was no ſooner returned to her bed, than ſhe worried herſelf, now, about his indiſpoſition; and now about the unfortunate ſituation of her ſon; remaining yet in entire ignorance as to its cauſe.

Emma, equally ignorant, ſuffered ſtill more acutely; becauſe, independant of the uneaſineſs ſhe felt for her brother, ſhe tenderly deplored the diſtreſs of her parents.

As ſoon as people began to ſtir in the ſtreets, Mourtray ſuddenly ſtarted up, and, wrapping himſelf up in his great coat (having never taken off his clothes), he took his hat, and then, without returning any anſwer to Mrs. Mourtray's enquiry whither he was going in ſuch haſte, he darted out of the houſe.

After waiting ſome time, and finding he did not return, Mrs. Mourtray and Emma ſat down to a comfortleſs break-

faſt,

fast; when, in despite of the orders given to the servants to let in no creature, Chowles bounced into the room.

"Servant ladies, servant," said he: "why, this is a sad piece of business, truly! What have you done with the lad?"

"If you mean Henry," answered Mrs. Mourtray, "he is absent."

"'Tis well; he had best keep out of the way, I can tell you; for, by what I hear, upon my soul, I believe Manders will die."

Mrs. Mourtray and her daughter, ready to faint with terror at the suspicions he had so incautiously raised, eagerly enquired, both at once, what he meant.

Chowles, a little diſconcerted, perceiving the miſchief he had done, made no anſwer.

"For the love of God, Mr. Chowles," cried Mrs. Mourtray, gaſping for breath, "do not thus torture me: explain your meaning; what has Henry done to this Manders?"

"Unfortunately, fought with him, Ma'am; and (as they ſay) wounded him mortally."

"Oh, God!" exclaimed Emma, ſinking, pale as death, back in her chair.

"But is he wounded himſelf? O, quickly tell me that?" aſked Mrs. Mourtray.

"Not that I know of; for he ran away directly after the event."

"God

"God be praiſed he did!" cried ſhe, who, totally regardleſs of all but her ſon's ſafety, was almoſt inſenſible to his having probably deſtroyed the life of a fellow-creature.

"It would be ſhocking, too," ſaid ſhe, after a moment's recollection, "if this Manders were to die!—Poor man!—But as it was a duel, I hope it is not poſſible that my ſon could be tried for murder?"

"Moſt aſſuredly he would," ſaid the unfeeling Chowles; "and I would not be in his ſkin for a good deal."

Mrs. Mourtray, with violent exclamations of affright, conjured him to go that inſtant, and learn the real ſtate of Manders; but Chowles proteſted the heat was ſo exceſſive, that he muſt have time to reſt a little before he could poſſibly move.

Forced, much againſt her will, to be patient, ſhe now enquired what had been the cauſe of this duel; ſaying, that ſhe had never heard Henry mention the name of Manders in her life.

But Chowles was prevented from giving an immediate reply by the entrance of Mourtray, who, without noticing his viſitor, ſunk ſpeechleſs into a chair; and when his wife began telling him the dreadful news, he ſtopped her ſhort, lifting up his hands, and ſaying, "I know all."

Chowles then renewing his converſation with Mrs. Mourtray, told her, that though he could not poſitively affirm it to be the cauſe, yet it was ſtrongly rumoured that the quarrel originated in a gaming debt.

"A gaming debt!" repeated Mourtray, ſhrugging his ſhoulders, and raiſing his

claſped hands to his forehead, with a look of deep anguiſh.

"Impoſſible! abſolutely impoſſible!" cried Mrs. Mourtray vehemently: "Henry certainly does not game; no, no; I am ſure there is not a word of truth in this report."

"Nay, I don't aver the report to be truth," ſaid Chowles; "though I muſt own to you, Ma'am, I think it very probable; for my young friend Henry (as my couſin Prouting tells me) is fond of ſhaking his elbows."

"Never mind a word ſhe ſays," cried Mrs. Mourtray angrily, "for ſhe has what the French call *une mauvaiſe langue*; but if even the poor boy was formerly a little imprudent in this way, I'll anſwer for his having lived very regularly of late; he has been conſtantly at home by twelve

o'clock, excepting the night before laſt, when he ſtaid out, at a ball, till morning."

"Ah! I wiſh he had only ſtaid at a ball!" ſaid Mourtray: "however, till now, I never heard of this."

"What ſignifies?" ſaid ſhe, colouring.

"I fear it ſignifies very much," replied her huſband; "for I greatly ſuſpect his ruin may be dated from that fatal night."

"Lord! how you terrify me! I muſt own he did not come home till near eight in the morning; and now I remember, when I ſaw him at breakfaſt, I thought he looked pale and diſcompoſed; at firſt, too, he was very abſent, but he ſoon recovered, and afterwards appeared in violent ſpirits."

"Which

"Which were feigned, no doubt," ſaid Mourtray, "to diſguiſe the real ſtate of his mind.—Why did not you tell me all this before?"

"Becauſe I thought it a matter of no conſequence; and that you might blame him for keeping ſuch late hours."

Chowles now offered to go and enquire after Captain Manders; but Mourtray ſaid he need not give himſelf that trouble, as he had already gained all the information that could be known at preſent; which was, that though he yet lived, he was in the greateſt danger.

The former, however, perſiſted in ſaying he would go in the courſe of a few hours, and return early in the evening, when he hoped, he ſaid, to bring Mrs. Mourtray better news.

Though poor Mourtray would gladly have diſpenſed with his company, he would not oppoſe an arrangement, from which his wife promiſed to herſelf ſome degree of comfort.

Juſt after the cloth was removed from a table, where the family had ſcarcely touched any breakfaſt, a letter, ſent from Richmond, was brought to Mourtray: with a trembling hand, and preſaging its contents, he opened it, and read what follows:

" *Richmond, June* 26, 179—

" Dear Sir,

" It is with the utmoſt reluctance that I trouble you at this moment, feeling infinite concern for your ſituation; but, in matters of importance, it is neceſſary to be explicit, without loſs of time.

" Doubtleſs

"Doubtless you are already informed of your ſon's raſh act, the terrible conſequences that are expected from it, as likewiſe, of his breach of promiſe; you cannot, therefore, expect otherwiſe, than that I ſhould inſtantly declare our treaty (thus violated by Mr. Henry Mourtray) to be null and void; and, I muſt add, that the very cogent reaſons for its diſſolution, preclude all poſſibility of its ever being renewed.

"Had the young man proved himſelf worthy of my daughter, as I once, too haſtily, believed he would, I ſhould have eſteemed myſelf happy to have been ſo nearly connected with ſuch eſtimable perſons as yourſelf and Lady.

"I truſt, however, by your paternal admonitions, that Mr. Henry Mourtray, who, as yet, has ſcarcely attained manhood, may be brought to ſee and repent of his errors, before it be too late; and

I would not, in your place, be ſparing of a little wholeſome correction, that you may the ſooner work his reformation.

"I ſincerely pray for this event, not only for his ſake, but alſo for your's, and that worthy Lady, his mother's, to whom I beg to offer my beſt reſpects.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

JAMES SILBOURNE."

Emma alone was in the room when her father read this letter: he could not ſpeak as he handed it to her; but the contents, grievous as they were, did not, in the leaſt, ſurprize either of them.

Deſirous, however, of ſparing Mrs. Mountray any additional pain, after all ſhe

ſhe had already endured, they agreed that this freſh affliction ſhould be concealed for the preſent.

"Raſh, unhappy boy!" cried Mourtray, a tear trembling in his eye; "how completely has he ruined himſelf!—What!—before three weeks had elapſed ſince the ſolemn engagement he took, you ſee, Emma, he breaks out in defiance of it, and ruſhes headlong into thoſe very vices which he had been warned would be his deſtruction!—It is very plain his duel with Captain Manders was in conſequence either of ſome tavern broil, or gambling diſpute, which happened on that fatal night he ſtaid from home!—His countenance, it ſeems, in the morning denoted ſomething to be wrong!—Alas! I did not ſee him then, nor did I, unfortunately, perceive his agitation when he received the letter yeſterday: if I had, perhaps I might, at leaſt, have prevented

prevented a part of this misfortune; but now ....."

His emotion now choaked his words, while Emma, bathed in tears, with sympathetic feelings, tenderly preſſed his hand to her lips.

"My dear, dear father!" cried ſhe, "let us hope that all will yet be well!—Manders will recover; and, perhaps, in time Mr. Silbourne will be reconciled to poor Henry."

"No, never!—my love, never!—He is a man of a firm and decided character, but very inflexible in all points; and, certainly, when he has every reaſon to think himſelf in the right, he will ſtrictly adhere to the reſolution he has made: do not, therefore, deceive yourſelf, or brother, with any hopes that his marriage with Miſs Silbourne will ever take place; yet, mortifying as it is to loſe all the bright

bright prospects that so lately opened before him, this is what gives me the least trouble: the sorrow *I* feel is chiefly occasioned by his breach of promise, and the apprehension that he has been guilty of a dreadful crime; but, if it please the Almighty to spare the life of Captain Manders, and that Henry, after smarting so severely for his rash folly and wickedness, should, indeed, reform, then I shall easily make up *my* mind to bear this disappointment, as to his marriage, as he must *his*; and, likewise, to be content with a narrow fortune, which, I fear, will be his lot."

"He will reform: I am sure he will; and become worthy of such a father, as, dear Papa, you have ever been to us both!—What has happened cannot fail of making a deep impression upon him."

"I wish,

"I wiſh, my Emma, I could think ſo; but, alas! I doubt it!—for, if he had ſo little forbearance, with ſuch a prize in view, what truſt can I have, that, were the preſent evils removed, he would not involve himſelf in freſh embarraſſments? Gaming, too, is, of all vices, that which takes the deepeſt root in the heart: however, Henry is young; and, if he could but acquire reſolution, it may yet be eradicated."

Chowles's entrance put an end to this converſation: he gave a very bad account of Captain Manders, of whoſe wounds the Surgeons entertained a moſt unfavourable opinion; nor had they yet been able to extract the ball, which was lodged in his ſide. The only circumſtance that had tranſpired concerning the duel, was, that it had been fought without ſeconds.

Intelli-

intelligence, ſuch as this threw a deeper gloom over all the party, to which Mrs. Mourtray had juſt added her company; but Chowles, who never participated in any uneaſy ſenſations that affected others, ſoon grew tired of looking ſad: therefore, under the pretext of calling off Mrs. Mourtray's and Emma's thoughts from diſagreeable ſubjects, he began a detail of the embelliſhments he projected for his houſe at Clapham; and recounted inſtances of his good fortune, in having picked up, at a low price, amongſt the poor emigrants, ſome choice pieces of china, and other curious articles; which, when properly placed, would have, he ſaid, a very grand effect, and render his villa one of the moſt ſuperb in the kingdom.

Mourtray, provoked at his inſenſibility, abruptly left the room: Emma wiſhed to follow his example; but a look from her mother, fixed her to her ſeat; whilſt the former,

formes, in liſtening to him, partly forgot her ſorrows.

Biſcuit figures, French clocks, glaſſes, chintz, and *Damas de trois couleurs*, ſwam, in ſucceſſion, before her eyes; and ſhe reflected, that, if ſhe could but ſhe Emma poſſeſſed of theſe treaſures, ſhe might again be happy. The object of her ſolicitude, however, ſat abſorbed in melancholy; and, ſo far from paying the leaſt attention to Chowles, ſhe only viewed him with increaſed diſguſt.

But, in the midſt of Mrs. Mountray's waking dreams, ſhe was diſturbed by a meſſage from her huſband, deſiring to ſpeak with her immediately.

She found him pacing the room, with a diſordered air; and, as ſoon as he ſaw her, he aſked, with ſome aſperity, if ſhe could prevail upon herſelf to quit Mr. Chowles's very intereſting details,

to

to attend to some letter to give her of her son?

Mrs. Mountray, whose transitions of temper were very sudden, at the mention of her son, forgot Chowles's catalogue, and instantly burst into tears; when Mountray, pointing to a letter which lay open on the table, said, in a tone of deep dejection, "*That* Sydney has sent me, by his groom. It fully explains the whole of the late dreadful transactions, and even informs me of what I did not, indeed, expect!"

"O! how you terrify me!" cried Mrs. Mountray:—"do read the letter to me."

"Excuse me," said he; "that is beyond my power:—I have neither voice, nor eyes, at present."

Mrs.

Mrs. Mourtray then read the letter herſelf:

Sydney Farm, June 26, 179—

" My dear Sir,

" In the firſt place, let me haſten to aſſure you, that your ſon is ſafely arrived here; and, though ſtill under great perturbation of mind, rather more compoſed than he was during our journey; and, as his perſon is quite unknown in this part of the country, you may reſt in perfect ſecurity about him: I have, beſides, had the precaution to introduce him into my humble habitation under the name of Morton; and none here, but my groom, who is the bearer of this, and whom I can truſt, have ever ſeen him before.

" Need I ſay how much it grieves me that I muſt, in the next place, ſeverely wound your feelings, by giving you that informa-

information which you have a right to expect; and, though my heart ſhrinks from the taſk, yet it is neceſſary that, without diſguiſe, you ſhould learn the whole of that unfortunate affair, of which you are already, in part (no doubt), by this time, acquainted.

"Henry, I am perſuaded, has been perfectly ingenuous in the account he has confided to me of the circumſtances, which I have undertaken to tranſmit to you.

"It ſeems that, on Monday night laſt, after attending the Silbournes to the play, and ſeeing them to their carriage, he met, at the door of the Theatre, Captain Manders, of the ——— Regiment of Guards, who offered to ſet him down at home, which offer he accepted; but, on the way, Manders, after ſome jokes on the domeſtic ſtyle of life he had lately adopted, perſuaded him to go and ſup with

with him at a tavern: there, he o
he drank very freely; and, being he
with wine, unfortunately he forgo
promise, and was prevailed upon t
gage in play.

"Fortune, at first, favoured him
prizingly, and he won a large sum;
as he was on the point of departur
the company being gone but Mar
and another officer, he consented, fo
as he was with his late success, to en
with them anew; when, in the spa
about two hours, he not only lost al
had won, but four thousand pounds
than he had any means of paying."

"Gracious God!" exclaimed
Mourtray:—"Henry to act thus!—
I could not have believed it possible

Her husband spoke not; and, af
short pause, she proceeded reading.

"

"This unlucky ſtroke entirely diſſipated
e fumes of wine: indignant againſt him-
lf, alarmed at the conſequences, and
ued to the very ſoul, he ſaw no other
nce of averting the impending dan-
er, than that of truſting to the honour
f theſe officers; he, therefore, gave them
candid account of his ſituation relative
o the Silbournes, ſolemnly aſſuring Man-
ers, that, immediately after his marriage,
is firſt care ſhould be to pay the large
um which he had loſt to him alone, and
or which he offered him a bond; and
hen he exacted from them both an oath,
ever to divulge the tranſactions of that
ight.

"Both the officers readily conſented to
o all he required; and the behaviour of
Manders, on this occaſion, was ſo gen-
leman-like, that Henry departed tho-
oughly ſatisfied of his honour; and ſo
uch relieved from his late tumultuous

ſenſa-

ſenſations, that he became tolerably calm: he could not, however, quiet ſome qualms of conſcience, ariſing from his breach of promiſe; but he had little apprehenſions of its being ever known, for he perfectly relied on the officers' word, eſpecially on that of Manders; and had he been leſs ſecure in regard to the other perſon, he knew he was going out of the way, being under orders to embark for Flanders early in the day.—The other perſons with whom he had played, had long left the tavern, and were all ſtrangers to him, as likewiſe he was to them.

" On Tueſday morning he waited upon Silbourne, and was, as uſual, cordially received by him and his daughter; but having a violent head-ache, he declined attending them, as they requeſted, to Kenſington-gardens; and, returning home, he ſought to gain an hour's ſleep, to enable him to appear before you at dinner, ſo that

that his looks might not betray his late agitation, which at breakfaſt, he feared, he had ill concealed from Mrs. Mourtray.

" Figure to yourſelf, therefore, my dear Sir, after all theſe precautions, what Henry's feelings muſt have been, when, in *your* preſence, he received the incloſed letter.

" TO HENRY MOURTRAY, ESQ.

" Sir,

" By an extraordinary chance, after you left me this morning, I learned from authority, which, I am grieved to ſay, can ſcarcely be doubted, that laſt night you violated the ſolemn promiſe you had given me ſo very lately, having loſt, at one ſitting, no leſs than four thouſand pounds!

" Whatever reaſon I have to cre[illegible] this diſagreeable information, if you c[illegible] upon the word and honour of a gent[illegible] man, deny it to be a fact, I will believe my ears deceived me, and then I ſhall hardly think any apology ſufficient, f[illegible] having troubled you with this deteſtab[illegible] calumny.

" I am going inſtantly with my family to Richmond, where I hope, in the courſe of the evening, to receive a line from you, unequivocally to contradict it.—But ſhould I not hear from you before to-morrow morning, I certainly ſhall conſider the report to be founded on truth, and conſequently, without making any comments on your conduct, ſhall declare our engagement to be null and void.

" In that caſe, I muſt, in my daughter's name, as well as my own, decline the continuance of your acquaintance; and as you are not ignorant that whatever reſolutions

reſolutions I form are irrevocable, I am perſuaded you will ſpare yourſelf, and me, the trouble of any uſeleſs applications.

" I do aſſure you, I ſhall be truly happy, if you can demonſtrate your innocence to him, who has the honour to be,

" Sir,

" Your obedient Servant,

" JAMES SILBOURNE."

London, Tueſday.

" What a cruel letter!" cried Mrs. Mourtray: " no wonder poor Henry was ſo affected by it!"

" Ah! he had but too much cauſe to be affected, becauſe he was conſcious of what he had done," ſaid Mourtray; " but

Silbourne's conduct, ſo far from being cruel, appears to me full of candour."

Mrs. Mourtray again reſumed Sydney's narrative.

"Henry, who was in a manner ſtunned with the peruſal of this fatal letter, had no ſooner, in ſome degree, recovered from the firſt ſhock, than he ruſhed out of your houſe, without any project what to do—mechanically, however, he turned his ſteps towards Silbourne's houſe, where he learned the family had been gone thence above an hour, but had left a ſervant in town, with orders to bring immediately to Richmond any letter that Mr. Henry Mourtray might ſend.

"Poor Henry had none to ſend! He dared not deny the truth of the report which had reached Silbourne's ears; but how that had happened, and ſo ſpeedily, too,

too, was a matter he determined to inveſtigate directly.

" The officers he thought muſt have been the perſons who had thus treacherouſly betrayed him, and, boiling with rage, he ſallied forth, reſolved to make them pay dearly for their perfidy; but recollecting that one was gone, and that only Manders remained, he haſtened in ſearch of him.

" Henry did not find Manders for ſome time, but at laſt traced, and ſtopped him; juſt as he was ſtepping into a hackney coach, in Cockſpur Street.—Henry rudely pulled him back, and with ſuch terms as fury dictated, haughtily taxing him with the baſeſt treachery, inſiſted upon inſtant ſatisfaction.

" By his own account, I fear he behaved, at this juncture, with a degree of violence little ſhort of madneſs: nor can

he recollect many particulars of what paſſed, excepting that they both got into the coach, when Manders, with much temper, poſitively denied the charge againſt him, ſwearing that he did not even know Silbourne by ſight; and that the perſon concerned in play with them, had been with him, from the time they had all three ſeparated in the morning, till he left town, two hours ſince.

" The condeſcenſion of Manders, in giving him this explanation, unfortunately had no effect on Henry, who refuſed giving the leaſt credit to it; and obſtinately inſiſted upon deciding the diſpute inſtantly with piſtols: the other, who was now become equally angry himſelf, conſented.

" The coachman was now ordered to drive to St. George's Fields, where, without any ſeconds, they propoſed to adjuſt the matter with the piſtols with which

Henry

Henry had provided himſelf.—The fatal buſineſs was ſoon terminated, for Manders received a ſhot in his ſide, and fell bathed in blood. This ſight brought Henry a little to himſelf; he attempted to bind up the wound, but his trembling hands refuſed the office; away, therefore, he flew to fetch a ſurgeon, whom, as well as the hackney coachman (who was waiting at a little diſtance), he directed to the place where Manders lay.

"Then making the beſt of his way back into the town, with his brain, he ſaid, burning as if it were on fire, he walked on with a quick diſordered ſtep, and had reached Charing Croſs, when fortunately I met him."

CHAP. II.

MRS. MOURTRAY now was forced to diſcontinue reading: the horror of Henry's raſh action, as likewiſe the idea of the danger to which he himſelf had been expoſed, overpowered her; and it was not till after ſhe had drunk a glaſs of water that ſhe was able to attend to Sydney's letter of which, her huſband offered to read to her the concluſion.

" —Glad to find the object of my ſearch, I caught hold of his arm, convinced, by the wildneſs of his air, that ſomething extraordinary had befallen him; but, offended with me, he tried to diſengage himſelf from my hold, ſternly demanding, why I attempted to detain him?

" This

" This was not a time for me to be captious, ſo I mildly told him the uneaſineſs his abſence had given to his family, and entreated he would ſuffer me to accompany him home."

" Home!" cried he; " home!—I ſhall have no home ſoon: I am a murderer!"

" Exceſſively ſhocked at this language, though I only imputed it to a temporary delirium, I tried firſt to ſooth, then to expoſtulate with him, but obſerved he did not attend to me; at laſt I hinted ſomething about Miſs Silbourne: at the ſound of her name he ſtarted, and, claſping his hands together, exclaimed, in agony, " Selina! ah, deareſt Selina!—loſt to me for ever!"

" Though he turned away his face, I ſaw he ſhed tears; this gave me comfort: and then I preſſed him ſo earneſtly to relieve his oppreſſed heart, by confiding

its ſorrows to me, that, in a few broken ſentences, he revealed the whole.

" Extremely alarmed, I ſaw there was not a moment to loſe to ſave him from the danger which threatened him, and that had not yet occurred to him: I therefore, inſenſibly, led him towards my lodgings, which I prevailed upon him to enter with me, where I ſecretly gave orders for a chaiſe and four to be got ready directly; being now reſolved that he ſhould not go home, as I had no doubt a ſtrict ſearch would be made after him, and the beſt method of ſecuring his ſafety ſeemed to be, to carry him directly out of town.

" But ſuddenly a freſh difficulty was ſtarted, after he had agreed to my plan; for Henry, who has really an excellent heart, refuſed peremptorily to ſtir till he heard what had become of Manders. I durſt not venture to ſend any body on ſuch

ſuch an enquiry, and I was afraid of leaving your ſon alone, who ſeemed, I muſt own, ripe for any deed of deſperation.

"At length, as oppoſition only irritated him, upon his pledging his word he would not move till my return, I went, privately, to gain in the neighbourhood where Manders, ſenior, lived, what intelligence I could.

"After waiting ſome time, I learned all I wanted to know; for I ſpoke with a ſurgeon of my acquaintance, coming out of the houſe, who told me the wounded man had juſt been conveyed home, where he was in ſuch a ſtate, that little hopes were entertained of his life, and that he had left two of his profeſſion with him.

"This ſad intelligence (which, however, I ſoftened, in ſome meaſure, to

Henry) haſtened my operations, and, after writing you a line, we ſet out inſtantly, and, travelling with the utmoſt expedition, reached this place in about eleven hours.

" My poor friend was extremely low all the way: he is now, by my perſuaſion, gone to bed.—I have written this in the greateſt haſte imaginable, to leſſen, in ſome degree, your anxiety: what I have further to communicate, I ſhall ſend by the poſt ſome hours hence.

" Adieu! my dear Sir.

" JULIAN SYDNEY."

Mourtray having finiſhed reading, a ſhort and melancholy converſation enſued between him and his wife; after which he went in queſt of his daughter.

He found Chowles alone in the drawing-room, biting his nails: at ſight of Mourtray

Mourtray he aroſe, and, ſullenly bidding him good night, departed.

It ſeems he had, moſt injudiciouſly, ſeized the opportunity her parents abſence afforded him, of pleading to Emma in favour of ſentiments always deteſtable to her from ſuch lips, but which, at ſuch a moment, ſhe felt as an abſolute outrage to all delicacy.

Hence ſhe had, without diſguiſing her diſguſt, abruptly left him.—Being now informed of his departure, ſhe haſtened to her father, who communicated to her Sydney's narrative. The ſenſations it excited in her breaſt may be more eaſily conceived than deſcribed; but ſhe had ſufficient fortitude to ſuppreſs much of what ſhe felt, and gently to ſooth the ſorrows of both her parents; for Mrs. Mourtray now joined her family.

The

The following morning Mourtra
ceived the promiſed letter from Syd
As uſual, he firſt read the content
himſelf; and Emma, who watched
countenance, ſaw, with infinite conc
that, whilſt he was reading, he chai
colour ſeveral times. When he
done, he gave her the letter, and l
her read it aloud to her mother: "I ſ
in the mean while," ſaid he, "retir
my own room."

His look, as he ſpake, was ſo
gloomy, that Emma had ſcarcely cou
to begin reading, till Mrs. Mourt
impatient, inſiſted upon it.

Sydney Farm, June 27, 17

"My dear Sir,

"Henry, probably exhauſted by
row and fatigue, is ſtill in bed, but
ſleep is too much diſturbed, to be (I f
refreſhing;—and now, I proceed to f
my promiſe.

"I o

"I own I could have wiſhed to defer, ll your ſpirits had ſomewhat recovered om their recent ſhock, mentioning ſome ircumſtances relative to my poor friend: or it is grievous to me to afflict thoſe, whoſe happineſs is ſo dear to me, as is your's, and that of all belonging to you.

"But Henry is of opinion, that it is much better you ſhould, at once, know the worſt, and that his mind will be greatly relieved by a full confeſſion to the kindeſt and moſt indulgent of fathers; whoſe anger, though juſt, may be deprecated by it.

"I am, therefore, to tell you, that Henry had, prior to the fatal gaming tranſaction, ſecretly taken meaſures, with Lord Wilmington's conſent, to ſell his commiſſion, to diſcharge ſome troubleſome debts which he did not wiſh ſhould appear againſt him; and he knew that Silbourne would

would rather be glad, than ſorry, that he left the army.

"At the time he formed this ſcheme he had not conſidered the reflections it would draw upon his character, to leave his profeſſion in the midſt of a war.—He now ſeverely repents having concluded the ſale of his commiſſion, two days before he left town; and the more ſo, as it will only diſcharge a ſmall part of what he owes: for, beſides his debt of honour to Manders, he owes near three thouſand pounds."

"The boy's brain is turned!" exclaimed Mrs. Mourtray, interrupting Emma; "he is raving mad, I am ſure!—and I don't believe a word of this.—But go on."

"—Let not this, my dear Sir, affect you too deeply. Pecuniary concerns, poſſibly, may be arranged, and certainly

are

are trifles compared to our other ſorrows. Never, till now, did I ſeriouſly repine at my ſcanty income, when it would be exquiſite joy to ſtep forward, on this occaſion, to my friend's aſſiſtance. However, I am not wholly without hope of being yet of ſome uſe, by means of the worthy Newton, who is quite a father to me.

" Excuſe the liberty I take:—I only hinted this, in caſe Henry's debts, coming thus ſuddenly upon you, might be any inconvenience. I am ſure you will have the goodneſs to ſend him a line, with an aſſurance of your pardon, which he is moſt anxious to receive. He has frequently mentioned, with deep concern, the pain which he is ſenſible he has inflicted upon his parents and ſiſter.

" I have, privately, taken meaſures to receive conſtant accounts of the ſtate of Manders; and now, my dear Sir, I have

only

only to add, that I ſhall be extremely deſirous to hear, that neither your health, nor that of Mrs. and Miſs Mourtray, have ſuffered during this ſevere trial. I am, indeed, the leſs uneaſy on your account, as I well know that your mind is ſtrengthened by a ſuperior ſhare of piety and fortitude.

" I am,

" With the ſincereſt eſteem and reſpect,

" My dear Sir,

" Your very faithful and obedient ſervant,

" JULIAN SYDNEY."

Mourtray, who came into the room as Emma finiſhed reading the laſt lines of the letter, was, now, eagerly aſked by his wife, whether he really believed his ſon could have been guilty of ſuch exceſſive extravagance as Sydney repreſented?—Mourtray ſtared at her with aſtoniſhment; angrily enquiring, whether ſhe ſuppoſed the account given by that moſt excellent

cellent young man to have been his own invention?

Mrs. Mourtray looked a little aſhamed; but ſaid, ſhe had wiſhed to perſuade herſelf, that Henry, in the preſent perturbed ſtate of his mind, ſpoke at random, without knowing what he ſaid.

Mourtray ſhook his head, aſſuring her, that he gave but too much credit to his confeſſion.

"Well!" cried Mrs. Mourtray, "who could have thought that Henry had been ſo extravagant!---Yet, there is one comfort left; for, however large his debts may be, the legacy, my dear, fortunately, will enable you to pay them: though it is exceſſively provoking to have any part of this money thus applied."

"I am ſorry to ſay, my dear," ſaid he, "that you are greatly miſtaken concerning the

the ſtate of my affairs: it is true, I can, and certainly will, pay Henry's debts; but, when I have done this, little, I aſſure you, of the legacy will remain, ſo much of it being already expended."

"You can't be ſerious: I know it impoſſible."

"Indeed, my dear," ſaid Mourray, with a ſigh, "you will find it but too true. The ſcheme in which Chowle perſuaded me to venture ten thouſand pounds with him is likely to prove a very bad undertaking; for I have lately learned (though he has been very ſilent on the ſubject), that he has as little hope as myſelf, that we ſhall ever recover one ſix-pence of our money, either in intereſt or principal."

"This is certainly a cruel ſtroke," ſaid ſhe; "but, however, after allowing for our late extraordinary expenſe ſti

ſtill nearly twenty thouſand pounds remain."

"No ſuch thing:—Downton has coſt me a great deal already; and, when the works are completed, I queſtion whether I ſhall have ſpent, there, leſs than three thouſand pounds: add to this, five thouſand pounds ſettled on you and Emma, which I hold to be ſacred; various ſums, paid for Henry; with the expenſes occaſioned by the increaſe of our little eſtabliſhment ſince we came to town;—not to mention the money I have been forced to advance to defray the heavy charges of the law ſuit carrying on in Antigua: caſt up theſe ſums together, and you will find how very ſmall a part of the legacy can remain."

"I am petrified!" cried Mrs. Mourtray: "all our hopes, now, muſt reſt on your recovering the eſtate abroad, and on Henry's marriage; for, I flatter myſelf,

Silbourne

Silbourne will, in time, be pacified, n
withſtanding what he wrote to my ſon.

" Alas! that is quite out of the qu
tion!—Silbourne has formally announc
to me, that the compact is at an e
between him and Henry: this diſagr
able circumſtance I have hitherto co
cealed from you; but now you mu
know the truth, that you may not buo
yourſelf up with falſe hopes. In regar
to the eſtate, I am not very ſanguine i
my expectations of ever being in poſſeſſio
of it; but as to ourſelves, we muſt retur
to Downton, and live quietly and frugally
there, as formerly:—would to God we
had never quitted it!—and, as to Henry
(if he can ſtay in England, which I
greatly apprehend will not be the caſe),
he muſt engage in ſome profeſſion to find
himſelf bread."

Mrs. Mourtray, afflicted before, was
now ſo overwhelmed with the weight of
theſe

theſe accumulated calamities, eſpecially *that* of returning to obſcurity, and to Downton, that ſhe could only relieve herſelf by ſhedding a torrent of tears; and her huſband, who thought it beſt to ſuffer her thus to vent her ſorrows, that they might ſubſide the ſooner, did not attempt to impede their courſe; but retired to write to Sydney, and his ſon.

The very amiable conduct of the former he viewed with the greater admiration, becauſe he had frequently obſerved, with diſpleaſure, the ſlighting manner with which Henry generally treated him; preſuming to ſneer at what he called his pedantry and premature wiſdom.

Sydney, he knew, had too much penetration not to have remarked ſomewhat of his offenſive behaviour, though he had the greatneſs of mind to deſpiſe it; and was far too noble to recollect it, when

when Henry ſtood in need of
aſſiſtance.

While Mourtray was writing his lett
the taſk of conſoling her mother devol
upon Emma, which was the more di
cult, as the reaſoning powers of M
Mourtray, were far leſs ſtrong than we
her paſſions.

That ſhe ſhould be forced to lay th
chief part of her tribulations to the ſco
of her darling, Henry, irritated as muc
as it vexed her: at the ſame time it ap
peared to her quite incomprehenſible, ho
he could involve both himſelf and fami
in ſuch difficulties: all compaſſion fo
his ſhare in theſe was loſt in anger, a
well as in diſappointment, at the cruel
certainty (for her huſband aſſerted it to be
ſuch) that Henry had entirely forfeited
Mr. Silbourne's favour, and thereby loſt
all chance of the brilliant fortune that
once ſeemed within his graſp: the legacy,
too,

o, which had been the cauſe of ſo much ultation, and on the ſtrength of which e had formed ſo many agreeable plans, nd, by concurring misfortunes, dwindled way; and now nothing was left but a precarious claim to an eſtate, God knows here!—All theſe were mortifications ſhe ould ill digeſt.

But none preſſed ſo hardly upon her as the neceſſity of returning to the ſolitude of Downton, with Emma yet unmarried; and ſhe could not dwell on a ſingle idea that offered conſolation, unleſs it was that of Chowles's attachment. If, indeed, ſhe could but effectuate a match between him and Emma, all yet (ſhe thought) might be well; but here ſhe had to contend with her daughter's averſion, and her huſband's indifference; two ſuch important obſtacles, that ſhe was at a loſs o deviſe how ſhe ſhould overcome hem.

Emma's cogitations, reſulting from the ſame cauſe, were very different: while her gentle nature made her tenderly lament her brother's unhappy ſituation, ſhe could neither juſtify his conduct, nor refrain from ſhuddering at the exceſſive violence of his paſſions; but never having formed very ſanguine notions of his ſteadineſs, her diſappointment was the leſs acute. Softened, herſelf, by love, ſhe imagined his loſs of Miſs Silbourne a much heavier calamity than that of her fortune: indeed, ſhe conſidered the diminution of the legacy, though certainly an evil, yet as one that might be endured with great reſignation. Her concern, nevertheleſs, for her parents ſufferings was extreme.

As for the baniſhment to Downton, ſhe regretted it; not becauſe it would ſequeſter her from the gay world, of which ſhe had already ſeen enough, to loſe, in great meaſure, a keen reliſh for its delights,

delights, always ſuperior in fancy to what they prove in actual enjoyment; but the real miſchief of this baniſhment was, that it would remove her far away from Lord Miramont, juſt at the time when ſhe thought ſhe had ſome chance of improving the partiality ſhe had long ſuſpected he felt for her.

However, as the misfortunes ſhe deplored were remedileſs, and had not originated from any fault of her's, ſhe determined, with her uſual good ſenſe, not to ſuffer her ſpirits to be ſubdued by them; but, rather, to exert herſelf to be of ſome uſe and comfort to her parents.

CHAP. III.

MRS. MOURTRAY, with a diſpoſition highly inflammable, always felt violently at firſt; but, except in regard to deep-rooted prejudices; joy and ſorrow, hope and fear, as well as every other paſſion, only tranſiently glided over her mind, never ſinking beneath the ſurface.

Thus, after the firſt paroxyſms of her grief had ſubſided, her anger againſt Henry ceaſed: her fears of the conſequences of the duel naturally grew fainter, as ſhe daily heard leſs alarming accounts of Manders; and her vexation at the rapid decreaſe of the legacy gave way to freſh hopes, artfully inſtilled into her by Chowles, of vaſt riches which ſtill awaited her, when once the law-ſuit ſhould be terminated.

Shou

Should this flattering viſion be realized, he had no doubt that Silbourne's anger might be appeaſed, and his former intentions reſumed in Henry's favour; and, what was full as material for her happineſs, ſhe ſhould then no longer be obliged to bury herſelf and Emma at Downton.

Poor Mourtray, whoſe character was very different, appeared ſometimes inſenſible, yet felt but too much for his own repoſe: ſlowly his mind received impreſſions; but, when once they fixed on it, they ſunk deeply and indelibly.

Hence, though he moſt cordially forgave his ſon, as he was enjoined to do by his religion and tender paternal feelings, yet he could neither eraſe from his memory the diſgrace he had brought upon himſelf, nor the numerous cauſes he had given him of diſſatisfaction.

Emma's behaviour, during this period of affliction, endeared her more than ever to her father: unaccuſtomed as he was to diſcharge his ſorrows into the breaſt of another, he would, at times, break through his reſerve, and ſeriouſly diſcourſe with her on his affairs; for though her inexperience and ignorance of buſineſs precluded the poſſiblity of his receiving aſſiſtance from her, the tender ſenſibility of her diſpoſition aſſured him of conſolation: to be liſtened to with ſympathiſing intereſt by a reaſonable being, is, indeed, one of the greateſt reliefs to a dejected mind.

During ten days, paſſed by the Mourtrays in all the fluctuations of hope and fear reſpecting the ſtate of Manders, the whole family remained at home, refuſing admittance to all company; for Manders had an alarming relapſe after he had been judged out of immediate danger; and, in conſequence of the vaſt loſs of blood

blood he had ſuffered, the ſurgeons had not yet ventured to pronounce a decided opinion as to his ſafety.

Mourtray now ſpent his whole time in a ſtrict ſcrutiny of his own and his ſon's affairs; but on an inveſtigation of the debts of the latter, they were found yet more conſiderable than he himſelf had apprehended.

He had not only gamed deeply, but occaſionally borrowed ſmall ſums, which, though they had eſcaped his own memory, were accurately remembered by others. Although Mourtray generouſly forbore to wound Henry by reproaches or complaints, at a time when he knew he was ſunk into deſpondency, he could not entirely conceal from him all the inconveniences which his extravagance had drawn upon his family, as well as himſelf.

After pointing out to him, in very forcible language, the neceſſity of adopting a ſtrict ſyſtem of œconomy, he earneſtly recommended to him, to conſult with his worthy friend Sydney on his future plan of life; promiſing his aſſiſtance, as far as his ability would permit, in any profeſſion he choſe to embrace.

Mourtray's letters to Sydney breathed the warmeſt expreſſions of gratitude for his kindneſs to his ſon; but, had his young friend been himſelf in a ſituation to aſſiſt him in pecuniary concerns, he would not have availed himſelf of his generoſity; of courſe, therefore, under the preſent circumſtances, he declined his offer.

Henry's letters to his father ſeemed written in the true ſpirit of contrition: he appeared to be ſenſible of his goodneſs; made admirable reſolutions touching his future conduct; dwelt with gratitude

titude on Sydney's friendly behaviour; promiſing to conſult with him, in regard to what line of life he ſhould purſue, and ſhortly acquaint him with his deciſion.—His anxiety concerning the life of Manders continued to torment him; though he perſiſted in believing that through him, by ſome indiſcretion, Silbourne had obtained the information which had blaſted all his hopes of happineſs.

Matters were in this ſtate, when, one morning, as Mrs. and Miſs Mourtray were ſitting at breakfaſt, a clamorous noiſe was heard in the hall; and Peter, burſting into the parlour, declared, that the old Frenchwoman who lived at Lady Wilmington's was below, and would not go away without ſeeing Miſs Mourtray.

She was, therefore, allowed to appear.—Her eyes were violently ſwelled, and

She was under ſuch extreme agitation that ſhe could not at firſt ſpeak, ſo as to be underſtood: all that could be gathered from her was, that the greateſt of all *malheurs* had juſt happened.

Mrs. Mourtray had no conception that the greateſt of all *malheurs* could relate to any other perſon than her ſon; therefore, inſtantly, ſhe concluded Manders was dead, and that Henry was carried to priſon; nor did it occur to her, how unlikely it was that Madame Duplin ſhould be the bearer of this intelligence.

But, breaking out into vehement exclamations, ſhe declared that ſhe was undone, ruined for ever, and the moſt wretched of human beings!

The ſorrows of Madame Duplin ſeemed now ſuſpended, while ſhe ſtared at her with aſtoniſhment, not in the leaſt comprehendin

prehending the cauſe of ſuch extraordinary agitation.

Emma, however, being accuſtomed to read her mother's thoughts, eaſily developed it; and, having learned what had thus affected the Frenchwoman, at laſt made Mrs. Mourtray comprehend, as ſoon as ſhe could obtain her attention,—that the greateſt of all *malheurs* was, the elopement of Lady Iſabella Fontelieu with Captain Darnford; and this event had ſo irritated Lord Wilmington, that he had immediately, *ſans façons*, turned Madame Duplin out of his houſe, and actually refuſed to pay the ſalary due to her.

"And this is all!—A mighty matter, indeed!" cried Mrs. Mourtray indignantly: "and ſo, Madame, you come blubbering here, frightening me out of my wits for this fooliſh buſineſs!"

Madame Duplin thought it a very ſerious one.—Lady Iſabella's elopement, ſhe ſaid, was a ſad thing; and it was much to be lamented, that ſo fine a young lady ſhould fling herſelf away on a *roué*: "*mais enfin*," added ſhe; "that is her affair."

Madame Duplin now recounted her own misfortunes.—To be accuſed of conniving at Lady Bell's flight; then diſgracefully diſmiſſed from a family ſhe had ſo long and faithfully ſerved;—to be ſent wandering into the wide world, without knowing whither to turn herſelf; were, ſhe ſaid, monſtrous wrongs; and ſhe reſolved to have the comfort, at leaſt, of complaining to Miſs Mourtray, who knew the injuſtice of the Earl's accuſation.

Now, though Mrs. Mourtray had no diſlike at any time to enumerate all her own grievances, ſhe had an inſurmount-

able

able diſlike to hear thoſe of others; and nothing could be leſs intereſting to her than Madame Duplin, her young lady, or, indeed, the whole houſe of Fontelieu.

She therefore drily obſerved, that if Lady Bell's marriage with Captain Darnford was conſidered as ſuch a misfortune, better care ought to have been taken to prevent it.—That, for her part, ſhe thought the Captain would have little cauſe to be elated by it; for that his wife, who had no fortune at preſent, had a diſpoſition to ſpend millions;—and that as to Madame herſelf, ſhe would find people enough willing to take her into their families, becauſe ſhe had the good luck to be born in France.

Madame Duplin bowed; a ſmile of ſelf-conſequence appeared on her broad face.

But Mrs. Mourtray was not
humour to let her enjoy this fi
compliment; ſo ſhe added, "if ye
Madame, an induſtrious Engliſh
and had every virtue and talen
the ſun, you would probably ſtarve
ever innocent you might be of a
ticipation in this affair of the elop
for it would certainly leave a ſlu
your character, at leaſt on the f
diſcretion:—but being, as I beſe
a Frenchwoman, who, whether g
bad, muſt find favour here, *you*
of doing well."

Madame Duplin now made a w
and retired; haſtening to the ho
thoſe of Lady Wilmington's acquai
whoſe curioſity ſhe knew was
ſtretch to learn all the particu
Lady Bell's flight: of this, howev
could only give a very imperfect a

The preceding night, Lady Bell, it ſeems, declined attending her mother to an aſſembly, and, pleading indiſpoſition, went early to bed. Madame Duplin, who ſlept in a cloſet within her chamber, declared ſhe never heard her ſtir; which was eaſily credited, as ſhe was a fat, groſs woman, likely to ſleep ſound, and moreover very deaf.

But ſhe imagined, that as ſoon as the houſe was quiet, her young lady ſoftly aroſe, and contrived to creep down ſtairs unheard.—The porter was ſtrongly ſuſpected of having opened the hall door, as it was judged impoſſible for her to have managed unbolting and unchaining it herſelf; and, as he lay cloſe to the hall, he muſt have heard this operation, if he did not himſelf perform it. Of courſe, though, as well as Madame Duplin, he proteſted his innocence, he was alſo diſcharged.

The

The watchman, finding the door ajar about four o'clock in the morning, alarmed the family.—Lord Wilmington was the firſt to ſuſpect what had happened, and with great haſte repaired himſelf to Lady Bell's chamber, which he found empty, and her governeſs ſnoring in bed, unconſcious of her abſence.

Servants were now diſpatched different ways in ſearch of the fugitive. Lord Wilmington, half frantic with rage, walked to Darnford's lodgings, which he found ſhut up, apparently uninhabited.—All the intelligence that was gained in the courſe of the ſervants enquiries, was, that a chaiſe and four had been ſeen driving at a furious rate, near Groſvenor Square, about two o'clock; and ſo much time having ſince elapſed, Lord Wilmington almoſt deſpaired that thoſe he ſent on the North road after his daughter would be able to overtake her: and he was in the right, for they never did.

Lady

Lady Wilmington, though leſs furious than her Lord, was extremely hurt, as well as offended, with her imprudent daughter's conduct; for which Lady Bell, in a note ſhe left on her mother's writing-table, did not deign to apologize: after ſaying that ſhe was on the point of putting herſelf under the protection of Captain Darnford, ſhe added a hope, that ſhe and her father would not refuſe their pardon for this ſtep, which ſhe had judged eſſential to her happineſs.

Although Mrs. Mourtray had been little inclined to talk of this event with Madame Duplin, it furniſhed her not only with converſation for the reſt of the day, but likewiſe with a vaſt field for conjecture as to its conſequences.

But it ſincerely pained Emma, who, though ſhe blamed, could not help loving Lady Bell more than ſhe deſerved; for he did not forget, that ſhe had been her

firſt, and, till lately, her deareſt friend; and it had not been without a ſevere ſtruggle with her feelings, that ſhe had broken off an intimacy, which had once been her chief happineſs, but which, when ſhe diſcovered her faulty principles, ſhe could no longer continue with her [illegible] approbation.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

As soon as Captain Manders was supposed to be completely out of danger, Mrs. Mourtray again opened her house to her friends, and Chowles, who had but reluctantly submitted to be thus long excluded from the sight of Emma, now renewed his incessant visits and persecutions, in despite of the chilling reception he received from her.

There was no moment in which Mrs. Mourtray would not have rejoiced in his company, but his unfeeling disposition had too much disgusted her husband, for him to permit any exception to be made in his favour, during the late period of distress in his family.

As

As Lady Wilmington had hon
Mrs. Mourtray with a morning call
door, when ſhe heard of the cruel u
neſs Henry had occaſioned, the M
trays returned the compliment, by
ing upon her ſoon after Lady Bell's
to Scotland. They were not admi
but the next day Emma received a
from her Ladyſhip, deſiring ſhe
come and dine with her; adding
ſhould be quite alone, as Lord Wil
ton and Lady Elizabeth were go
Windſor.

Emma, therefore, had no objection
cept her invitation, and the leſs, be
ſhe ſhould not probably have anoth
portunity of waiting upon her; it
decided by her father, whether his
at Downton were ready or not, tha
moment he had finiſhed ſettling H
affairs, the family ſhould return th
and ſhift as well as they could.

He now only waited to conclude his buſineſs, till his lawyer had thoroughly inveſtigated what appeared an uſurious demand of one of his ſon's creditors, to ſummon him to town. He was yet ignorant what profeſſion he might chooſe, for, hitherto, Henry had come to no deciſion on the ſubject. Mourtray, therefore, preſſed urgently for this, as he neither wiſhed him to leave the country till that point was decided, nor till he had paid the whole of his debts.

Lady Wilmington received Emma with infinitely more cordiality than was her uſual cuſtom. The chagrin occaſioned by her daughter's folly, had ſeriouſly affected her health, and her proud diſpoſition ſeemed ſoftened by grief.

She enquired, with ſome degree of intereſt, after her parents, whoſe ſufferings, as ſuch, her own had taught her to commiſerate;

miſerate; and ſhe requeſted to hear the particulars of Henry's unhappy ſtory.

As great part of it was already too well known in the world, Emma, when ſhe related it, did not attempt to diſguiſe facts; but ſhe omitted thoſe circumſtances which the Counteſs might not have heard.

"Ah! my wretched daughter," ſaid Lady Wilmington, when Emma ceaſed ſpeaking, "and your brother, reſemble each other greatly in character. Both are wild and volatile; vain, inconſiderate, and extravagant; caring little for others, and feeling only for themſelves.---Henry Mourtray, however, may retrieve his character, which (excuſe my ſaying) he has ſomewhat diſgraced by leaving the army at this time: but, ſhould he repent of his errors, and reform his conduct, *he* may again be a comfort to his family; and though he has loſt, by his own fault,

a very

a very advantageous eſtabliſhment, yet, as he is a handſome youth, ſome other *Miſs* of fortune may take a fancy to him, and, perhaps, he may marry extremely well.

" Far different is the caſe with Bell!—Born and educated to fill a diſtinguiſhed place in the world, ſhe has, irreparably, diſgraced one of the firſt families in the kingdom; deſtroyed my peace; diſappointed all her father's views for her own, as well as his advantage; and, probably, injured Elizabeth moſt eſſentially; for when one girl commits any notorious folly, the good-natured world readily believes her ſiſter inclined to do the ſame.—To conclude; all theſe evils Bell has brought upon herſelf and others,—to throw herſelf, moſt indelicately, into the arms of a gameſter, a profligate, a man of no birth, who has nothing but his ſword to depend upon!"

Emma

Emma wiſhed extremely to ſa
thing to ſoften Lady Wilmingto
pleaſure; but her countenance, w
firſt appeared mild and languid, h
reſumed its native haughtineſs, a
eyes flaſhed with indignant fire, w
enumerated her cauſes of co
againſt her daughter.

Emma, however, as much as ſh
gently felt her way, but ſhe could
on; for Lady Wilmington, hold
her finger, ſaid, ſternly, "Not on
will I hear, Miſs Mourtray, in her
no:—I neither can, nor will, ſhew
indulgence, for ſhe deſerves none
cially while her ſiſter is unmarried
poſſibly, might take it into her h
act as wrong, if ſhe ſaw I could f
forgive."

Emma, now, could only wiſh tha
Elizabeth was well married, fore

from this ſpeech, that Lady Wilmington would then ceaſe to be inexorable.

After a ſhort ſilence, ſhe was agreeably ſurprized to hear the Counteſs acknowledge herſelf greatly obliged to her, for the pains ſhe had taken to diſſuade Lady Bell from marrying Darnford. "This I diſcovered," ſaid ſhe, "on looking over her papers: amongſt theſe, there was a rough copy of a letter to that odious man, in which ſhe mentions, with aſperity, the arguments you had uſed to detach her from him; promiſing, however, not to attend to your abſurd prudence.—Would to God Bell had liſtened to your excellent advice; and that her principles had been like your's! How much miſery, then, would ſhe not have ſpared herſelf, and us all!"

Emma was much gratified by Lady Wilmington's commendations, and the

more ſo, as ſhe was not apt to be liberal in beſtowing them.

As the Counteſs was indiſpoſed, ſhe did not leave her dreſſing-room, where the cloth was laid for dinner; and, juſt as it was bringing upon the table, Lord Miramont, very unexpectedly, arrived. "I came, Madam," ſaid he, "to have the pleaſure of dining *tête-à-tête* with you; but I ſee you have provided yourſelf with very agreeable company:" and advancing to Emma, he aſked a thouſand queſtions about her health, and that of her family, lamenting, with warmth, the length of time which had paſſed ſince he had ſeen her.

Emma, bluſhing and confuſed, could ſcarcely articulate, when ſhe attempted to anſwer him; her ſpirits were in a flutter, that ſhe haſtened to take ſeat at the table, and to ſwallow,

: could, the ſoup that was placed
: her.

'ray, Madam," ſaid Lord Miramont
ı aunt, "have you obſerved how
I am reformed, and how exactly I
ur dinner hour? You ſee, I am now
ae all punctuality."

This is ſomething very new," an-
d Lady Wilmington, laughing, "and
proceed from ſome extraordinary
e. I do not, however, recollect
g told you, when you called this
ng, that Miſs Mourtray was to dine
me; I am, therefore, at a loſs to
nt, after having neglected me for
time, how you came ſuddenly to be
with ſuch a particular fit of affec-
owards me."

rd Miramont coloured; and at-
ed to juſtify himſelf from the accu-
of having neglected his aunt, whom

he declared was not only inexpreſſibly dear to him, but whoſe ſociety he liked beyond all others.

This was one of the pleaſanteſt days Emma had ever paſſed. Lady Wilmington, though unwell, and rather out of ſpirits, after a little while, when ſhe became cordial with her nephew, got into high good humour; and Lord Miramont was ſo extremely agreeable, and attentive in his behaviour to Emma, that ſhe was more than ever charmed with him.

After coffee, the Counteſs complained of the head-ache, but ſhe would not ſuffer her gueſts to leave her; ſhe only begged they would permit her to lie down on her *chaiſe longue*.—To avoid diſturbing her, they took their ſeats in a window opening into a balcony filled with plants and flowers, where they converſed in a low voice together.

Emma

Emma, who had not ventured to aſk Lady Wilmington what had become of Lady Bell ſince her marriage, now learned, from Lord Miramont, that ſhe and her huſband went immediately afterwards to Scarborough; and that it was reported he was exceedingly diſappointed, when he found that his wife would not become entitled to her fortune, till ſhe became of age.

Emma ſaid, ſhe apprehended ſhe would have but too much cauſe to lament her indiſcretion; in which opinion Lord Miramont joined; aſſuring Emma, that he would neglect nothing to bring about a reconciliation between Lord and Lady Wilmington and his couſin:—"Though I have little hopes," continued he, "of ſucceeding with the former, who is altogether as harſh to the frailties of others as he is indulgent to his own. Beſides, I am rather upon cool terms with him, of which my aunt is ignorant, and I could

not tell her this, as I knew it would vex her; but that is the reaſon why I have, of late, been here ſo ſeldom."

Lord Miramont then chatted with her, on various ſubjects, with all the cordiality of friendſhip; but when ſhe mentioned her approaching departure for the country, ſhe fancied he ſtarted; and, from that inſtant, he became grave, and occaſionally penſive.

After a ſilence of ſome moments, he ſaid:—"Going into the country!—going where I ſhall never ſee you!"

"Ah!" thought Emma, "that is your own fault;" but ſhe ſaid nothing.

"Why leave town, dear Miſs Mourtray?" cried he, earneſtly; "why leave a place that you are formed to adorn?"

"To

o attend my parents," ſhe anſwered ;
ſo inſignificant an object as myſelf
ver be miſſed any where."

ſignificant!" exclaimed he :—" no,
who ſo lovely, ſo good ; and who
ch admired, as Miſs Mourtray!"

that inſtant Lady Wilmington,
mal à propos in the opinion of
) deſired him to ring the bell ; and,
ing brought, no further converſa-
aſſed between the two young peo-
yet he had ſaid enough to infuſe
er mind a more ſanguine belief of
tachment than ſhe had ever yet in-
; for his eyes, and the accent of
ice, expreſſed what his lips, for ſome
ſhe could not penetrate, ſeemed to
to pronounce.

was late in the evening before the
teſs would part with her ; nor did
Miramont retire till he had con-

ducted her to Mrs. Mourtray's c
when he gently preſſed her ha
bade her farewell.

But it was not deſtined that
ſhould long, undiſturbed, enjoy t
ſent delicious ſenſations; for t
news ſhe heard, when ſhe got hon
that her mother had been in fits,
juſt heard ſome unpleaſant intel
about her brother.

"My God!" cried Emma, t
"what can have happened now?"
then ſhe aſked after her father.

"La, Ma'am, he's gone out with
Sydney," anſwered Peter.

"With Mr. Sydney!" excl
Emma, going up ſtairs to ſee her m
but Peter ſtopped her, ſaying, th
Lady had fallen into a ſlumber; an
Mrs. Jay (her maid) deſired as ho

not go up, for fear of diſturbing reſs.

hy did not you," ſaid Emma, directly, and fetch me the mo- y mother was taken ill?"

hy, la, Ma'am, the carriage went an hour and half ago, juſt after piece of work happened!"

a well recollected ſhe had kept it being then too agreeably engaged of time; but now ſhe enquired d happened?

ou won't be angry, Ma'am," ſaid oking very ruefully, "you ſhall whole ſtory:—Mr. Chowles was laying at *gammon* with miſtreſs, ter was out. Rap-tap goes the p runs I, thinking 'twas maſter, s Squire Sydney; and ſo he axes ſter, and ſeemed deſperate vexed

that he was abroad; and ſo then he axes after the Captain, if he'd been home, and ſuch like. Lord bleſs me! I cou'd tell no more about him than the child unborn! So then, ſays he, I muſt go and look for him: I cannot think where he can be; but ſay nothing to your Lady about him, or that I've been here; and, juſt then, who ſhou'd come but maſter; ſo, after they had talked together a bit, out they both went: then the bell begun ring, ring; and up I went, and ſo miſtreſs wou'd know who'd been in the houſe; and I told a fib or two; but, ſomehow, ſhe got the whole out of me, for I had no thought of miſchief; and there ſhe begins crying and ſcreaming, and making ſuch a to do, I thought, verily, I ſhou'd have gone crazy; and ſo ...."

"Well, well; that is enough," cried Emma: "you ſhould not have told my mother what Mr. Sydney bade you not tell."

She

She now went ſoftly to her mother's chamber door; and having liſtened ſome time, without hearing the leaſt noiſe, ſhe hoped ſhe was aſleep, and returned to the drawing-room, where ſhe found her father, juſt come home: his pallid cheeks denoted the perturbation of his mind; but her account of her mother's quiet repoſe ſomewhat tranquilized him.

Emma, full of anxiety, eagerly enquired the cauſe of this freſh alarm concerning Henry.

"My dear girl," anſwered Mourtray; "that rath boy will certainly be my death!—God forgive him for it!—Juſt as I had arranged his affairs, and ſaw ſome little proſpect of tranquillity, after ſo much ſorrow and trouble, I learn that he is gone off!—for what purpoſe it is impoſſible to conceive."

"Is it poſſible," cried Emma, "that he ſhould thus vex the beſt of fathers, and fly from Sydney, who had been ſo kind to him!"

"O! theſe are conſiderations that he never thought about: ſome mad ſcheme darted into his brain, and inſtantly he determined to put it into execution. It ſeems, after appearing tolerably quiet and compoſed for ſome days, and diſcuſſing frequently, with Sydney, different plans for his future way of life, they retired to their reſpective chambers, on Sunday night: early on the following morning Sydney was obliged to go on ſome buſineſs to ———, fourteen miles from his habitation, and he left (as he thought) Henry faſt aſleep in bed; but, on his return in the evening, to his great aſtoniſhment, he learned that Henry had never been ſeen the whole day; and that it was plain he had not been in bed the preceding night. You may imagine how much

poor Sydney was chagrined, and, bt, provoked, at being thus duped ungrateful boy; who, when he im good night, on Sunday, ſhook rdially by the hand, aſking whe- ſhould return the next day to

dney anſwered, he was afraid he not get back in time; which, I , ſuited Henry's views extremely. then ſet out, endeavouring to dif- which way he was gone, but to no , for he could not trace him; and is come to town, having, as he me hopes that Henry might have into his plans; and here, of courſe, diſappointed.

I had heard, accidentally, that Sil- was returned to Harley Street, , after he had told me this pretty ropoſed that we ſhould go thither, quire whether Henry had made any

any attempt to ſee Miſs Silbourne, we could hear nothing of him, an family will ſet out to-morrow for York

" Had Henry diſappeared in the mor I might have ſuppoſed that he had, i walks, been arreſted for debt; but and Sydney parted at eleven o'clo night, and that he did not go to it is certain that he ſallied fort break of day; yet he took nothing him."

" Surely," cried Emma, " he is bent on fighting Manders again."

" That idea occurred to me," Mourtray; " but Manders is ſafe i father's houſe, going ſhortly to Briſt the recovery of his health: in ſhor dear Emma, it is in vain to reaſon o actions of a man who has no reaſon, I fear, as little heart.

"To-morrow we muſt try to pacify and comfort your poor mother; and now let us retire to reſt, my love, and humbly implore the Almighty to calm our troubled minds, and guard this unhappy wanderer from committing ſome deſperate act, that may ruin him for ever."

Emma, bathed in tears, hung upon her father's neck; and, whilſt he fondly preſſed her to his boſom, he forgot, for a moment, the ſorrows that preyed on his heart.

The next morning, Mrs. Mourtray being much reſtored by ſleep, ſhe learned the particulars of her ſon's flight; and, after all that has been related of her fondneſs for him, as well as of the little command ſhe had over her paſſions, it may eaſily be conceived what ſhe ſaid and did on this occaſion: ſhe wanted to write both to Manders and Silbourne, to conjure them to tell her if they could account for Henry's diſappearance; but

Mourtray,

Mourtray, at laſt, prevailed upon her to abandon this meaſure, demonſtrating its inutility.

Emma, ſome days before, had written to Selina, requeſting permiſſion to wait upon her; and, in anſwer, ſhe received a civil but rather cold excuſe, probably dictated by her father, begging leave to defer having the pleaſure of ſeeing her till the following winter, when they might meet (ſhe hoped) without any painful retroſpections.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

A LARGE packet, from Antigua, on Mourtray found on his table the ning of Sydney's arrival in town, he not the courage to open till the fol- ing morning: nothing could be leſs eable than the contents; his agent, in great amazement, had not received remittance he had ſent, through rles, who had undertaken this buſi- ; and, upon enquiry, he proteſted he not neglected it.

he account of the law-ſuit was the t unpromiſing poſſible: in ſhort, y thing relative to the eſtate was ted, by the agent, in the gloomieſt ours.

n the other hand, Mourtray received tter from a man of large fortune, and

of

of the firſt reſpectability in the
who, by his late couſin's papers, a
to have lived with him in h
friendſhip. This Gentleman inform
that the pending ſuit ſeemed l
end in his diſfavour, entirely o
the fault of his agent, whom he in
to be a very worthleſs fellow; h
fore, ſtrenuously urged him to co
himſelf, without delay; aſſuring h
by a little perſonal exertion, an
meaſures which he would take th
to recommend, he had no d
ſpeedily having the pleaſure o
him in poſſeſſion of the eſtate; w
every principle of equity, he co
as his indiſputable right.

The very perplexing ſtate of M
affairs, in Antigua, called loud
him to decide, directly, on ſome
to diſentangle them; and to
his agent from further impo
him, by drawing bills that h

not pay, without the utmoſt inconvenience.

The liberality of his couſin had, indeed, enabled him to render the favourite ſeat of his anceſtors comfortable: perhaps, however, it might have been better, had he never poſſeſſed the means of improving it; for this unfortunate legacy had given birth to ſome idle projects of his own, which he had been in too much haſte to effectuate: it had filled his wife with notions that ſhe never, but for this, would have entertained of the neceſſity of living in a certain ſtyle in the world; and certainly it had been one of the principal cauſes of his ſon's ruin; who, had it not been for this, could neither have obtained credit to ſupport his extravagance, nor have dared to plunge into it.

Mourtray's firſt idea, dictated by deſpair, was to renounce all claim to the eſtate in queſtion; and retiring with his family

family to Downton, there to end his days in obſcurity; but maturer reflection made him heſitate in adopting this plan: it ſeemed a ſort of ingratitude to the memory of his couſin, thus petulantly to relinquiſh the bounty he had beſtowed, and which undoubtedly was meant not merely for his own, but likewiſe for the benefit of his children.

Wrong and eccentric as was Henry's conduct, Mowbray's heart reminded him, that ſtill he was his ſon; *that* bade him hope a time would yet come when this ſon, ceaſing to be an alien from his family, might become a worthy member of ſociety, and be the comfort of his declining years.

But if he ought not to neglect *his* intereſt, ſtill leſs ought he to neglect *that* of the amiable, the dutiful Emma; for whom no other proviſion had been made than five thouſand pounds after her mother's

deceaſe: the idea of being enabled
ter to reward her merit, decided
ctuating opinions; and he felt, ſuch
ve would invigorate thoſe exertions
e now perſuaded himſelf it was his
o make.

ſhrank, however, in diſmay from
ſk of announcing to his family,
ally to his wife, the reſolution he
ken of going immediately to An-
to undertake himſelf the manage-
of his affairs, and never to return
gland till he had ſettled them to his
ction.

avoid the oppoſition he expected
ounter from Mrs. Mourtray, he
y made his arrangements and pre-
ons for his voyage with all poſſible
ch: his lawyer (who was likewiſe
onfidential friend) being the only
r to whom he communicated his

Every

Every thing being ready for hi
ture, he was on the point of ma
dreaded diſcloſure to his family,
received a letter from Henry,
either date or poſt-mark; and
though extremely unpleaſant in
as to its contents, relieved him, h
from all apprehenſions concer
ſafety, he determined to keep i
ſerve, as likely to afford his wi
degree of conſolation for the v
news he had to impart.

With the utmoſt tenderneſs, af
ing his reaſons for the meaſure, h
it to her. But no language can
her aſtoniſhment, or the variety
emotions: ſhe burſt into a violen
of tears; accuſed him of monſtrous
bitterly complained that every b
ſerted her; and at length, findi
callous to her reproaches, ſhe c
her battery, and had recourſe to
and entreaties.

These Mourtray was less able to withstand; yet, being thoroughly convinced of the propriety of his resolution, he remained inflexible: he therefore contented himself with gently soothing her, and holding out to her view the hopes he had of returning possessed of such affluence as would amply compensate for a short separation, as well as for the privation of some indulgencies, which he could at present no longer afford to grant; and then, when she appeared somewhat pacified by this prospect of future happiness, and was become tolerably calm, he read to her the following letter from Henry.

"My dear Sir,

"I am almost equally embarrassed, whether to remain silent, or to write; but, as I apprehend my disappearance may occasion you and my mother more alarm and uneasiness than, perhaps, I deserve to have felt for me, I take the liberty of addressing you with a few lines.

"You

"You will naturally expect th
should account for the extraordinary
I have taken; yet that is impossible,
should thereby frustrate my purpos
all I can say is, that I declare my de
ture from the farm, was not a pre
tated scheme, but in consequence
sudden thought that darted into my h
when I found Sydney's intended ab
would so much favour my flight.

"Two objects, of the utmost import
(I may say, to my very existence), I h
that time in view: in one of these I
unfortunately, been disappointed;
should I be equally unsuccessful in
other, you shall never hear more o
unhappy son, who has been the wret
cause of affliction to the best of fathe
A something, however, in my b
whispers me, that I shall, some fu
day, dare to meet your eye without b
ing, and that my conduct will entitl
to receive the pardon, the blessing,

the approbation of my dear parents; for whoſe happineſs, as well as that of my ſiſter's, I ſhall ever pray.

" I have written a line to Sydney, to whoſe kind friendſhip I think myſelf highly indebted.—Let my mother have no anxiety about my health; I am well, but doubt whether ever again I ſhall feel happy. However, I will try, at leaſt, to be reconciled to myſelf; in the mean while, ſuffer me to hope that you will ſometimes think with pity and indulgence on,

" Your affectionate, dutiful,

" but unhappy ſon,

" HENRY MOURTRAY."

This letter produced the effect Mourtray expected from it on his wife:—Certain that her ſon was alive and well, ſhe eaſily perſuaded herſelf, that, without money or reſources, he would ſoon be tired of purſuing whatever wild ſcheme

he had embraced, and be glad to throw himſelf into the arms of his family: nor did Mourtray differ much with her in opinion on this point.

Henry's intentions, however, were couched in terms too obſcure to be fathomed by either; nor did his letter to Sydney contain any expreſſion that could ſerve to elucidate them. It conſiſted merely of apologies for his abrupt departure—acknowledgments of gratitude for his kindneſs—and good wiſhes for his health and happineſs.

Sydney, the moment he had received this letter, haſtened with it to Mourtray, who deſired he would wait till the following day, before he mentioned it to his wife or daughter, for reaſons that he would hereafter explain.

No ſooner had Mourtray got over the abovementioned unpleaſant ſcene with his

ife, than he ſent for Emma, to make
me diſcloſure to her: but her beha-
was very different from her mo-
.—To loſe the ſociety of her beloved
, was the ſevereſt blow ſhe could
e; and her exquiſite ſenſibility made
el it moſt poignantly; but, having
bſerved the ſtate of extreme dejec-
nto which he had gradually ſunk,
w, immediately, that ſhe ought not
plore any circumſtance that would
him from it; and whether his exer-
were or were not ſucceſsful, ſhe
that he would conſole himſelf,
ver might be the event, when he
onſcious he had done his duty by
nily.

ead of giving way to unavailing
ſhe haſtened to aſſure her father,
e whole ſtudy of her life, during his
e, ſhould be to pleaſe and com-
r mother.

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He embraced her tenderly, and then both went to join Mrs. Mourtray, whom, to their great aſtoniſhment, they found juſt as compoſed as if nothing had happened to diſturb her. The cauſe of this ſudden change they forbore to enquire, nor did ſhe communicate it, meaning, for the preſent, to keep it a profound ſecret in her own breaſt.

The fact was, ſhe had hit on a ſcheme, whence ſhe promiſed to herſelf infinite conſolation; and while her huſband and daughter had been holding their conference, ſhe had diſpatched a note to Chowles, requeſting to ſee him as ſpeedily as poſſible. She had received an anſwer, in which he promiſed to obey her commands early in the evening; and the thoughts of this interview occaſioned the tranquillity that amazed her family.

Sydney that day dined in Wimpole Street: an unuſual ſadneſs hung on his brow

ow, which all the family remarked, ren before he had heard of Mourtray's tended departure,—a circumſtance not kely to clear it, as he loved and reſpected im full as much as if he had been is father.

On their noticing his dejection, he aid, he had juſt received very diſagree- ible intelligence relative to the declining tate of his mother's health:—" I mean," aid he, " to go, with all poſſible expedi- ion, to Florence. Early to-morrow morn- ng I ſet out; but whatever haſte I make, I greatly apprehend arriving too late."

Mrs. Mourtray, who held Lady Clan- narmon's character in the utmoſt con- tempt, and who could not conceive that her death could, even by her own ſon, be conſidered as a misfortune, eſpecially as he would gain by it a title and an eſtate, coolly obſerved, that were ſhe in his place, ſhe ſhould heſitate to undertake a

long journey in ſuch very warm weather, perhaps to no purpoſe.

"The trifling inconvenience you mention, Madam," ſaid Sydney, with ſome diſpleaſure, "is unworthy of a thought: could I but hope to arrive in time to afford the ſlighteſt conſolation to a dying parent—good God! how amply ſhould I be rewarded for any pain or trouble that *I* could poſſibly ſuffer!"

"All this would be mighty well," replied Mrs. Mourtray, "if Lady Clannarmon behaved kind and tenderly to you; but—."

"Spare me on this ſubject, I entreat, Madam," interrupted Sydney with warmth; "and you would oblige me by recollecting, that I have often aſſured you I have no cauſe to complain of my mother.—But my ardent wiſh to ſee her, is not merely

merely on my own account, for I have a more important object in view."

He did not explain what this was, but Mourtray, who knew his generous ſolicitude relative to his brother, eaſily gueſſed it was to make another effort in his favour with Lady Clannarmon.

Sydney heard, with great concern, that Mourtray was going to be ſeparated from his family, being ſenſible how much his amiable daughter, to whom he was deſervedly ſo very dear, would feel his loſs. He thought himſelf fortunate, after having taken leave of the reſt of the family, that he had, before his departure, an opportunity of ſpeaking for a few minutes with Emma alone.

Henry, at firſt, was the ſubject of their converſation; Sydney ſaid, that, however unſucceſsful he had been hitherto in his reſearches, to diſcover what was become

of that ill-fated young man, he would not be diſcouraged from perſevering in in them; "for," added he, "during the ſhort time he was my gueſt, he warmly engaged my affections:—before that time, in my endeavours to be of uſe to him, I had ſolely been actuated by my regard for his family."

With the moſt engaging ſweetneſs, ſhe thanked him for all the trouble he had taken to ſerve her unfortunate brother, and for the promiſe he had given her of ſtill intereſting himſelf in his fate; aſſuring him, that ſhe ſhould ever gratefully remember the active friendſhip he had ſhewn in the late diſtreſſing events; and lamenting, that Henry's eccentricities had rendered abortive all his kind exertions, as well as all the pains her father had taken, to reſtore him to comfort, and to his friends.

Sydney delicately diſclaimed having had any merit in the ſlight ſervices he had rendered her brother; "would to God! Miſs Mourtray," continued he, "it were, indeed, in my power to be of eſſential uſe to your dear father, or any part of his family; for what taſk ſhould I think too difficult, to be repaid by you with one kind word—one ſmile of approbation."

"You far over-rate the value of ſuch ſlight tokens of gratitude," ſaid Emma, faintly ſmiling: "however, be aſſured, Mr. Sydney, my good wiſhes and higheſt eſteem will ever attend you."

A tear gliſtened in Sydney's eyes, "Ah! deareſt, beloved Miſs Mourtray!" ſaid he, "your eſteem is moſt precious to me —could you but know what paſſes in my heart—but, no, I muſt not—I ought not—trouble you with a detail of my wretched-

neſs. I too well know, that for me there is no hope—Adieu! then, moſt amiable Miſs Mourtray, I muſt fly from you; yet let me have the conſolation of believing, if, by any chance, you ſhould ever have occaſion for any friendly office that I can perform, you will remember that I am moſt truly, moſt faithfully, devoted to you for ever."

And, as he finiſhed theſe words, he hurried out of the room.—Emma was greatly affected; the innumerable good qualities of Sydney, his indefatigable pains in every friendly exertion, and his total diſregard of all that only affected himſelf, could not fail of ſecuring him an intereſt in the hearts of all who knew him; and had not Emma's predilection in favour of the Marquis, rendered her inſenſible to all other men, it is probable that Sydney's long and faithful attachment, which he ſo delicately forbore to plead, might

ght not have been unfortunate; for, th the exception of beauty, he had ery virtue that could gain eſteem.—To ı excellent and highly cultivated un- ırſtanding, he united a thouſand agree- ıle talents, elegant manners, and a reetneſs of temper almoſt unequalled.

CHAP. VI.

WHILE Sydney and Emma hac engaged in this farewell conf Mrs. Mourtray had been cloſette Chowles, to whom ſhe diffuſely all her grievances, to which he ga a cold attention; nevertheleſs, as not obſerve it, ſhe concluded with " and now, my dear ſir, I aſk yo friend, whom I know I can depenc what is to be done?"

Chowles ſhook his head,—" Wh ly, Ma'am," ſaid he, " I hardly kno to ſay to you; for your huſband l termined on this meaſure withou ſulting me, which if he had done, I have been clearly againſt it; bec don't think he has a turn for buſine ſuch like."

ll, but ſince he is reſolved to go,"
s. Mourtray impatiently, "I ſee
od of preventing him, unleſs, in-
ıu employ your friendly interpo-

d, Ma'am! why he'd mind no
y thing I could ſay, if I was to
I was black in the face, than if
ırked."

en poor Emma and myſelf muſt
to be again immured at Down-

at need not be the caſe; for I'll
fairly, without mincing matters,
you'll perſuade Mourtray to give
ma (I ſhan't mind her being a
y, or ſo), I'll take her without a
:; which, let me tell you, I think
ndſome offer; and then you ſhall
ıd ſtay with me as long as you
ıd as for Emma, ſhe ſhall, as Mrs.
Chowles,

Chowles, appear as fine as any Ducheſs in the land, I promiſe you."

"Ah! if it depended upon me," ſaid Mrs. Mourtray, ſighing, "Emma ſhould be your's this inſtant; I could not diſpoſe of her more to my mind—but ſhe, like other young girls, who know not what is beſt for them, ſeems averſe to marriage; and I doubt whether Mr. Mourtray would enforce your ſuit as he ought."

"Why, then, Ma'am, nothing mo
can be ſaid, or done; but 'tis a great pi
—Only think of your daughter, with h
handſome face, and queen-like figu
dreſſed in the richeſt clothes that ha
can make; and covered from top to
with the fineſt jewels! Only think o
lolling in the handſomeſt coach in Lon
—and then, what houſes both in
and country, what a ſumptuous
and what a tribe of ſervants ſhe will

his, give me leave to ſay, merits
flection before 'tis refuſed."

fuſed! good Heaven Mr. Chowles,
efuſed, after all you have ſaid, I
ink my daughter, and my huſband
rk-ſtaring mad: however, he is be-
id I will go directly, and mention
ir to him.—If he would but ſpeak
to Emma, ſhe is really ſo good a
at I have no doubt he might per-
er to accept a propoſal, which, in
ion, is highly honourable on your
id is certainly, by far, the moſt
geous ſhe will ever receive."

les, who was troubled with no
ſcruples, cared little, if he could
ain Emma's hand, whether or not
ffed her affections; and he eaſily
l himſelf that Mourtray, whom
v to be perplexed at the ſtate of
rs, and pinched by the diſburſe-
hat he had made for his ſon,
would

would not turn a deaf ear to his propoſal, which he had purpoſely dreſſed out in the gaudieſt colours to dazzle the eyes of Mrs. Mourtray.

While he was ſolacing himſelf with hopes, his advocate, with a volubility that aſtoniſhed her huſband, informed him of the offer made by Chowles; expatiating warmly on his generoſity, and on the prodigious advantages that would accrue to the family if it were accepted. But Mourtray liſtened to her harangue with ſuch provoking coldneſs, that ſhe exclaimed—"Lord bleſs me, Mr. Mourtray, you are really too bad! Think, I beſeech you, what an offer this is! When you become Chowles's father-in-law, all your embarraſſments will be at an end; for, then, you may command what money you pleaſe; and, of courſe, your voyage to Antigua will be quite unneceſſary.—As to Emma's ſqueamiſhneſs, that is all nonſenſe; ſhe will hereafter rejoice

joice that ſhe was not ſuffered to indulge it: and only think how happy I ſhall be at Clapham!"

"Ay," thought Mourtray; "the true motive of all this eagerneſs to marry poor Emma to a man ſhe hates, is compriſed in one ſhort ſentence,—*how happy I ſhall be at Clapham!*"

"Do ſpeak, Mr. Mourtray," cried ſhe: "your ſilent fits are very unſeaſonable at preſent."

"I have very little to ſay," anſwered he: "ſend for Emma; tell her yourſelf what Chowles propoſes; I ſhall ſay nothing to counteract your wiſhes, neither ſhall I ſupport them by perſuaſion: on a matter of ſuch importance, ſhe ſhall decide for herſelf."

Emma was ſummoned, and appeared. —Mrs. Mourtray, then, with all the eloquence

quence ſhe poſſeſſed, pleaded f
friend Chowles; extolling his ge
and magnificence; expatiating on
numerable advantages ſuch a matc
procure, not only to herſelf, but
dear father, and every branch of
mily; and, above all, on the de
would give her to paſs the ſum
his beautiful villa; not in an out
way part of the world like D
but ſituated in a charming nei
hood, and within a pleaſant a
London.

During this oration, Emma fi
eyes expreſſively on her father, t
trate his ſentiments; and, as soo
mother ceaſed ſpeaking, ſhe we
took his hand.

"If I marry Mr. Chowles," f
"will you, Papa, continue in En

"C

" Certainly not; I muſt go to Antigua; ıe intereſt of my family, eſpecially that : your brother, renders my voyage thi- ıer indiſpenſable; for with every return- g day I feel more clearly convinced, ıat I alone can ſettle my perplexing fairs there."

" Would you permit Mr. Chowles ma- rially to aſſiſt you in theſe ?"

" By no means: for I will never owe ecuniary obligations to any man."

" God Almighty be praiſed!" cried mma, raiſing her fine eyes to Heaven, that this ſacrifice, the moſt cruel that ould be impoſed upon me, may be diſ- enſed with!—If, by marrying this man, could ſave my deareſt father a long and angerous voyage, rendered more ſo on ccount of the war; and thereby detain im, to be the joy and comfort of his mily, to whom he is juſtly ſo dear—I might

might have heſitated.—If, indeed, by this ſacrifice, I could hope to extricate him from the difficulties that haraſs him, and that nothing leſs could ſave my mother and brother from being reduced to abſolute want,—then, certainly I would without repining, ſubmit to my fate; for whatever miſery I ſhould endure, would be ſoftened by the reflection, that I had done my duty.—But, if by rendering myſelf completely wretched, I ſhould neither do my parents, nor my brother, any eſſential ſervice, and only gain for myſelf influence, which I deſpiſe,—I do not hesitate, in poſitively rejecting Mr. Chowle's offer."

"My dear Emma, let me beg, let I entreat you," cried Mrs. Mourtray, "take time to conſider of it: recollect all have told you, and how happy your acceptance would make me."

"I ſh

"I flattered myſelf," ſaid Emma, "that I had convinced you, Madam, that your happineſs is extremely dear to me; but excuſe my adding, that I cannot ſuppoſe my dear Mamma would, for the ſake of ſo inſignificant a matter as paſſing a ſummer at Clapham, rather than in her own houſe, wiſh her child to paſs every ſummer of her life, and every winter, too, with a man who is perfectly odious to her."

Mrs. Mourtray coloured; ſhe felt that Emma perceived the littleneſs of mind ſhe had betrayed on this occaſion; her courage failed her, and ſhe dared not preſs her daughter to become miſerable. —Emma, too, appeared at this moment ſo noble, ſo generous, with ſuch animation in her beautiful countenance, and ſuch grace in her manner, that Mrs. Mourtray, though abaſhed and mortified, could not refrain from admiring her.

As for Mourtray, he was too well acquainted with his daughter to be in the leaſt ſurprized at her behaviour; ſhe had preciſely acted as he had expected; and a tear that fell upon her cheek, as he fondly folded her to his boſom, more forcibly expreſſed how he was touched by it, than any words he could uſe.

Nothing, then, remained to be done, but for Mrs. Mourtray to return to Chowles, and acquaint him with the ill ſucceſs of her miſſion.—He was very much vexed, as well as diſappointed; but he was forced to relinquiſh a ſuit, which he ſaw he ſhould have no chance of carrying, with ſuch a decided majority in the family againſt it. He did not, however, do this with a good grace; for he ſharply reproached Mrs. Mourtray, with having been lukewarm in the buſineſs.

She

She fired at the injuſtice of this accu-
ion, and ſaid, ſince he took matters ſo,
d uſed his friends ſo ill, ſhe was not
ry at his diſappointment. This enraged
m violently, and he went away mutter-
g,—that he was a curſed aſs ever to
ink of a girl who had a fool for her
ther.

So rude and impertinent a ſpeech ſunk
eply into Mrs. Mourtray's mind, who
ained againſt her former favourite much
will for a long time.

With his couſins, the Proutings, ſhe
d of late been a good deal diſguſted;
d, during her ſhort remaining ſtay in
wn, ſhe ſaw no more of any of the
nily.

While Mrs. Mourtray had been holding
is ſharp dialogue with Chowles, her
ſband had been pouring out the ten-
reſt effuſions of paternal affection to his
belove

beloved Emma:—"My child," ſaid he, "thou ſweet comfort of my life, for whoſe ſake (I was almoſt going to ſay) *alone*, I wiſh to live, be aſſured I never entertained the moſt diſtant idea of conſtraining you to give your hand unaccompanied by your heart: nay, ſo far from it, I never have even hinted to you, that I had yet ſeen that man whom I could approve as your huſband; nor do I ſeek to dive into the ſecrets of your heart: yet, one word before we part: if that heart, my Emma, ſhould acknowledge any preference, I promiſe you my concurrence in whatever choice you may make; and here I give it you, in writing (giving her a ſealed paper). Such unlimited confidence is not dangerous with you; but, on the contrary, will inſpire your generous nature with double caution, that *your* actions may prove I did not think too well of my daughter."

"Ah!

"Ah! my father!—my beloved father!" cried Emma, burſting into tears; "ſurely no girl was ever bleſſed with ſuch an indulgent parent as myſelf!—I cannot, however, ... no, I feel it is impoſſible, to let you depart ..... without revealing to you every thought of my ſoul.—Know, then ..... what ſhall I ſay?—how can I confeſs to you, that I fear my heart is no longer in my own power."

Emma hung her head, her cheeks burning, and her emotion almoſt ſtifling her words; but Mourtray, who ſaw her confuſion, encouraged her to proceed.

"Fear nothing, my dear girl," ſaid he, preſſing her hand tenderly:—"if a full confeſſion of your ſentiments will be any relief to your mind; if my counſels can be of uſe to you, ſpeak:—if not, be ſilent; for I abhor the idea of wringing a ſecret, even from my own child."

"What a monſter that child muſt be," cried Emma, "who could perſiſt in keeping a ſecret from ſuch a father!—I am not that monſter, dear Papa. In ſhort, ... not always recollecting your prudent advice, to be cautious in taking ſudden predilections, no ſooner did I ſee ... Lord Miramont ... than, forgetting the difference of our ſituations, and the innumerable obſtacles that formed a barrier between us ..... my fooliſh heart, nevertheleſs, from that inſtant, became entirely his own."

"I muſt own, I am very ſorry for it," ſaid Mourtray; "for, though I am little acquainted with this young nobleman, report ſpeaks unfavourably of his principles. It would hurt me leſs to hear you had fallen in love with ſome indigent, but honeſt, worthy man, than with a perſon of Lord Miramont's high rank, but whoſe moral character appears very doubtful: yet, tell me, have you any reaſon to believe

lieve, my child, that he is, in the leaſt, partial to you? I have always underſtood, that he had a very improper attachment: *that* alone, I ſhould have thought, would have repreſſed your partiality towards him."

"It is too true," ſaid Emma, "that he has either a real or an oſtenſible attachment, which I acknowledge to be very ſhocking; yet, I muſt confeſs, that I have ſometimes not only thought that he was diſengaging himſelf from it, but, likewiſe, that he by no means regarded me with indifference; though, I fear, you will think this merely the ſuggeſtions of vanity."

"My dear Emma," ſaid Mourray, ſhaking his head—"as it ſeems deſtined that no creature ſhould be perfect, *this*, unfortunately, is your weak point: I mean, that readineſs to believe that others entertain the ſame partiality for you,

which your ſuſceptibility ſo ſpeedily imbibes for them: now I love you too well to conceal, that this notion originates in vanity; and, if not checked, will be the ſource of inceſſant mortifications to you: hence your credulity, in regard to your firſt friend, Lady Iſabella, in whoſe friendſhip and character (as I foretold) you have only met diſappointment: a ſecond, more grievous, perhaps, awaits you in Lord Miramont. However, ſhould I be miſtaken, and ſhould he really propoſe to you, let me conjure you, my deareſt girl, neither to be ſoftened by a romantic paſſion, nor yet to be dazzled by the ſplendour of his ſituation; but firmly to refuſe giving him your hand, unleſs you are perfectly convinced of the entire reformation of his morals: of all evils, none ought more carefully to be avoided, than an union between a virtuous and an immoral mind: it is not only riſking the whole of your temporal, but even of your eternal felicity; for, alas! the contagion

of

of vice is the moſt ſubtle of all poiſons. Believe me, few women ever ſucceed in reforming their huſbands, though numberleſs inſtances may be given of men, who contaminate the principles of their wives."

—"I promiſe you, my dear Papa," ſaid Emma, weeping, "that no conſideration ſhould induce me to marry Lord Miramont, were he to honour me with the offer of his hand, unleſs his conduct became ſuch as you could approve: in the mean while, I will correct my own faults."

"I rely on your promiſe in both reſpects; and now, let me thank and applaud you for the ingenuous confeſſion you have made. Without meaning to reproach you, my Emma, I muſt obſerve, that, had you repoſed this confidence in me, when firſt you became acquainted with the Marquis, you would probably

have ſpared yourſelf much uneaſineſs; and, I flatter myſelf, I ſhould have taught you how to ſtifle this paſſion in its infancy. It is not, however, yet too late; at leaſt, to curb it: perform, therefore, with redoubled diligence, all your religious duties, avoid all light reading, and keep yourſelf conſtantly uſefully employed.—May God Almighty ſtrengthen your mind, and preſerve you!"

The father and daughter now ſeparated; the former, though pained by what he had heard, ſaw more to admire than to blame in his ſweet Emma; and the latter, while ſhe felt her boſom lightened by the honeſt avowal of her weakneſs, adored her excellent parent's goodneſs and indulgence.

Every thing being now ready for the Mourtrays departure from town, though the houſe at Downton was not quite ſo

for

for their reception, Mrs. Mourtray and Emma agreed, rather to ſubmit to ſome inconvenience, than forego the melancholy pleaſure of performing the journey in Mourtray's company; for Downton was only a few miles out of the direct road to Falmouth, where he was to embark; thither, therefore, he himſelf conducted them.

After ſtaying one day to ſet his affairs in ſome order, he took a very tender farewell of his wife and daughter, and proceeded on his journey.—Mrs. Mourtray, at firſt, gave way to the moſt extravagant grief, whilſt Emma, who was more deeply affected, deemed it right to check her own ſorrow, that ſhe might be enabled to ſooth that of her mother's: the latter ſoon became tolerably compoſed, and found ſome amuſement in contriving and adapting her old furniture, to fit the modernized apartments of her houſe.

While ſhe was buſtling about, ſhe only occaſionally, when any thing went wrong, renewed her lamentations at her huſband's abſence,—at her ſon's diſappearance,—and at her misfortune in living ſecluded from the world.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

BEFORE Emma left town, ſhe had called, for a moment, to take leave of her French friends, who moſt ſincerely lamented her departure; nor did ſhe quit them without much regret. As her acquaintance with *Sidonie* had increaſed, ſhe found her, in reality, poſſeſſed of all thoſe amiable qualities, which ſhe had once fancied belonged to Lady Bell.—The diſappointment ſhe had experienced in regard to that volatile lady, had taught her, that no durable attachment can ſubſiſt, where the parties materially differ in principle; but with *Sidonie*, whoſe mind was as pure as her own, and who had, beſides, a very ſtrong underſtanding, ſhe had no apprehenſions that her friendſhip could ever undergo any change.

After an abſence of above five months, Emma was now once more ſettled on her native ſpot; the change it had undergone by the late improvements, however, ſtruck her leſs than *that* ſhe perceived in herſelf.

Her life at Downton, formerly, had paſſed ſmoothly on, without a ſingle incident happening that left much impreſſion on her mind. The moſt important occurrence then, was a viſit to Wilmington. No cares, no paſſions, diſturbed her ſerenity; only, now and then, a tranſient regret, when Lady Bell Fontelieu had warmed her imagination, by florid details of the gaieties of London, that ſhe could not participate in them.

The unexpected circumſtance of the legacy, had, by opening a new ſcene to her, given riſe to new paſſions, or, at leaſt, had awakened thoſe in her breaſt which had lain dormant before. Her perſon

perſon, too, was altered; ſhe had loſt ſomewhat of the appearance of rude health, and looked more delicate, without being leſs lovely. Her figure was better faſhioned; her manners more elegant; and ſhe had cultivated, with ſucceſs, various accompliſhments, particularly muſic:—to her proficiency on the piano-forte ſhe had added ſinging; in which ſhe had learned to excel, under *Cimador*'s direction.

But her gay vivacity, alas! was impaired.—The departure of her father, whom ſhe adored;—the ſtrange abſence of her brother;—and the diſappointment ſhe felt, that Lord Miramont had made no effort to detain her, although he ſeemed to lament that ſhe was to leave town;—all theſe cauſes together, afforded matter for diſquiet and regret. Sometimes, too, the recollection of poor Sydney, who loved her ſo tenderly, ſo reſpectfully, and

yet ſo hopeleſsly, drew a ſigh of pity from her breaſt.

What her father had inſinuated concerning her propenſity to vanity, ſhe could not help acknowledging to be true.—Poſſibly, then, miſled by that, ſhe had fancied what only exiſted in her own brain: and the Marquis, perfectly indifferent concerning her, had ceaſed, as ſoon as he no longer ſaw, to beſtow a thought upon her.

Mortifying as was this reflection, Emma reſolved to ſtruggle againſt deſpondence. Still, however, in deſpite of her father's good advice, ſhe did not attempt to conquer her partiality for Lord Miramont; becauſe, though it might be deemed a weakneſs, it could not be deemed criminal: on the contrary, ſhe imagined, while he remained ſingle, ſhe might cheriſh it, as it added an additional motive, to her ardent deſire, of attaining every improve-

ement of mind, that might make
pear more amiable in the eyes of
ıom alone ſhe wiſhed to pleaſe.

e mean while, the month of Auguſt
to her endleſs, for the only thing
ch ſhe looked forward with any
tion, during her father's abſence,
ıe arrival of the Counteſs at Wil-
ın, who was ſhortly expected; and
uld talk of her nephew. The Earl,
great delight, could not annoy, or
ın her to interrupt her viſits, for he
ıne to Ireland, where he was ex-
to ſtay ſome time, to ſave his
ty there from the depredations of
ɔels.

ilſt ſhe was longing for Lady Wil-
ın to arrive, Mrs. Mourtray was
ıly made ſupremely happy, by the
ition of ſome neighbours,—perſons
tly congenial to her diſpoſition,
and

and with whom she had long been acquainted.

This fortunate event was occasioned by the following circumstance. Colonel and Mrs. Thornley had been driven from their house in Kent, by having what is called an excellent neighbourhood; which had only the small inconvenience of being very expensive: but this they disregarded, till certain impertinent people, acting very unceremoniously towards the Colonel, obliged him to make some arrangements unnecessary to relate.—The result of these was, that his estate of 1200*l.* a year went to nurse; and a small allowance from his creditors, with Mrs. Thornley's pin-money, remained for the maintenance of his family; he therefore judged it expedient to go upon a plan of economy, and hired a house in —— shire, within a mile of Downton.

This

This houſe, known by the name of the Cottage, had originally been a hunting-box; but its laſt proprietor having deſtroyed himſelf, about thirty years before it came into the hands of the Thornleys, it had, till then, excepting for a ſhort period, been uninhabited: at firſt, for the abſurd reaſon, that it was ſuppoſed to be haunted; and when that notion was exploded, its decayed ſtate, and bleak ſituation (the few trees that once ſheltered it having been hewn), afforded to thoſe, who might have hired it, more ſolid objections.

Colonel Thornley, who had chiefly lived in an encloſed, now fancied he preferred an open country: the ſituation of the Cottage, therefore, delighted him; and finding it would be let at a very low rent, he hired it for a long term; the proprietor conſenting to make ſome neceſſary repairs.

In

In conſequence of this agreement, the houſe was rendered habitable, and aſſumed a ſpruce appearance, under the Colonel's direction, who was a very active, managing perſon; and, a little before the ſhooting ſeaſon began, he, his wife, and ſiſter, Miſs Rebecca Thornley, arrived, to take poſſeſſion of their new habitation.

Theſe three perſons were all noted for good-nature; one alone of them had an excellent underſtanding, the other two were far from being over-burthened with it, but all poſſeſſed a tolerable ſhare of knowledge of the world.

The Colonel, a merry, good-humoured, though choleric man, took ſome pleaſure in ſhooting; ſtill more in cards; and the greateſt of all, in eating and drinking.

His wife's joy was, to paſs one half of her time in bed, and the other half in complete

complete indolence; only, occaſionally, exerting herſelf ſo far, as to turn over the pages of a new novel: ſhe had, however, no objection to a quiet game at cards, though ſhe would be well ſatisfied without it, if let to repoſe on a couch, and not be forced to think of any thing.

Miſs Rebecca Thornley was of a very different diſpoſition; ſhe was all activity, both mental and bodily; ſhe generally thought both for her brother and his wife; and, having a ſmall independent fortune of her own, ſhe never ſeemed to ſuppoſe any other advantage could be derived from it, ſave that of being uſeful to them, and to every diſtreſſed perſon who came in her way.

She was ſeveral years younger than Colonel and Mrs. Thornley, who were nearly of the ſame age; and at this period Miſs Thornley was about five and thirty; not handſome, nor yet ill-looking; but the

the idea of marriage ſeemed never to have entered her head; and ſhe ſuffered herſelf to be placed on the liſt of old maids, without marking the ſlighteſt diſpleaſure.

She had enjoyed, with all her heart and ſoul, the gay feſtivities of her brother's Kentiſh houſe and neighbourhood, where almoſt the whole year uſed to paſs in a continual carnival; and now, ſhe appeared juſt as well pleaſed with her ſolitary abode on the Downs.

If ſhe could get a horſe, humanity alone curbed her bridle; elſe ſhe could ride till the beaſt knocked up: if ſhe could get none, ſhe walked all over the country; provided ſhe was in motion, ſhe cared little where ſhe went; but, if an act of kindneſs or charity was to be performed, ſhe ſeemed endued with Herculean ſtrength; and, then, neither wind nor weather, nor any other impediment could ſtop her perambulations.

When

When decorum obliged her to ſtay with the family, ſhe read, or worked, inceſſantly; and at night, when ſhe could get a party, ſhe played at cards with the ſame perſeverance.

No circumſtance could affect the unalterable ſweetneſs of her temper for more than an inſtant, nor any difficulty diſcourage her active benevolence:—Ingratitude might wound, but could not diſhearten her; and although ſhe had no memory to retain an injury, none poſſeſſed one more retentive of an obligation, however ſlight it might be.

Without having had the advantage of a ſuperior education, ſhe was, in a manner, ſelf-taught; and ſeemed to know, by intuition, all that coſts others much pains to learn: added to this, ſhe never forgot what ſhe had once read; and naturally poſſeſſed a lively playful wit, that acted as

as a gentle ſtimulus, but never as a cauſtic.

Such was Miſs Thornley;—who, relinquiſhing all the pleaſures of the world, in which ſhe was ſo well adapted to take a part, as alſo to contribute to thoſe of others; but who, nevertheleſs, choſe to bury herſelf in very dull ſociety at the Cottage, merely becauſe ſhe knew, that her brother and ſiſter, derived equal advantage from her fortune and her company.

To do them juſtice, however, they both loved her as well as they were capable of loving any thing; though not ſo much as ſhe deſerved. It is needleſs to mention, what a vaſt improvement ſuch a family as the Thornleys were, in Mrs. Mourtray's opinion, to her neighbourhood.

The cloſeſt intimacy was immediately ſtruck up between them: no day paſſed in which the families did not meet, and

no

no evening cloſed without a ſociable game of cards.

Mrs. Mourtray, who had reſumed all her former notability, buſtled about her houſe as uſual; and, while ſhe pampered the Colonel's appetite with good old Engliſh diſhes, of which ſhe herſelf ſuperintended the cookery, he declared ſhe was the firſt of women, and that all others were idiots compared to her.

Theſe commendations gratified Mrs. Mourtray not a little; he became her chief favourite.—Mrs. Thornley was rather too much of, what ſhe called, a dawdle, to pleaſe her thoroughly, yet ſhe was uſeful to make up a rubber; and Miſs Thornley, who was equally convenient in this reſpect, amuſed and cheered her ſpirits.

Her houſe, now, was very comfortable; and, if the weather was particularly bad, ſhe

ſhe could give a bed to a friend or two [illegible]
—upon the whole, therefore, ſhe was [illegible]
happy; though, ſtill ſhe occaſionally la[illegible]
mented the want of her huſband and ſo[illegible]
company; and perhaps ſtill oftener, th[illegible]
her excellent coach remained uſele[illegible]
having no longer any horſes to draw it.

Emma, at firſt, ſaw little in any of the Thornleys to intereſt her much, except ing for the ſake of her mother. The Colonel's broad joke, and horſe laugh, often offended her delicacy, whilſt his gluttony diſguſted her. The inſipidity of Mrs. Thornley oppreſſed her, like a dead weight, which ſhe could not throw off. Miſs Thornley, indeed, ſeemed the moſt bearable of the party: but ſhe never appeared to leſs advantage than at a card-table, where Emma ſaw her far oftener than elſewhere.

The chief, and, perhaps, the only foible Rebecca had, was an uncontroulable eager-

at play; no matter how trifling
: and ſhe would warmly con-
t a fiſh, which ſhe deſpiſed, or
bout the manner of playing a
ugh ſhe had more ſolicitude to
ſkill, than to win the money of
, which ſhe never did without
:.

ſe times when Emma might
yed her company, ſhe was not
d; for either ſhe was galloping
country, or, with her ſeven-
ots, ſtriding to ſome neighbour-
or village, to perform ſome
n for her indolent ſiſter-in-law;
frequently on ſome errand of

uſual flaſhes of wit, or ſmart re-
at eſcaped her lips, made Emma
er with more attention: and no
d ſhe done this, than ſhe be-
came

came ſenſible of, and admired the uncommon worth of her cha acter.

But her acquaintance with Miſs Thornley had not time to ripen into intimacy, for, about the end of September, the Counteſs and Lady Elizabeth arrived at Wilmington; and the former had only been three days in the country, when ſhe wrote a very kind note to Emma, entreating her to come and ſtay ſome time with her, as ſhe and her daughter were quite alone; Lord Wilmington being likely to be detained a long while in Ireland.—She likewiſe ſent a civil, flattering, meſſage to Mrs. Mourtray, to put her in good humour, that ſhe might the more readily conſent, to part with her daughter.

The ſociety of the Thornleys, being quite ſufficient, to prevent her mother from feeling any loſs by her abſence, Emma had no ſcruple in leaving her; and the day following was appointed,

with

with Mrs. Mourtray's thorough approbation, for Lady Wilmington's carriage to fetch her from Downton.

Miſs Thornley, with her uſual good nature, promiſed Emma, when ſhe took leave of her the night before her departure, that no morning ſhould paſs without her calling at Downton, to ſee if ſhe could be of any uſe to Mrs. Mourtray.

CHAP. VIII.

EMMA felt her ſpirits unuſually exhilarated as ſhe entered the park gate at Wilmington; a preſentiment ſhe could not account for, whiſpered her, that ſome extraordinary pleaſure awaited her; and in this humour ſhe haſtened to the Counteſs, whoſe reception was all ſhe could wiſh.

Even Lady Elizabeth was gracious, for, in the country Emma's company was not to be deſpiſed; and as her Ladyſhip was particularly ſubject to *ennui*, the concomitant of idleneſs, ſhe needed the aſſiſtance of a gay active mind to diſpel it. "Do not imagine," ſaid ſhe, "that we ſhall be a female *trio*, for my brother, moſt unexpectedly, arrived laſt night, and with him a mighty pretty young man, Sir Harry Paragon, who came from Germany

any with him: we have, beſides, an
:quaintance of your's (Emma felt her
ce glow),—my couſin Miramont."

" Yes," ſaid Lady Wilmington, " my
:phew had the goodneſs to come hither,
ıtirely in compliment to Fontelieu; who
ıs been induced to curtail his travels,
ving to the diſagreeable ſtate of the
ıntinent."

Emma, though inexpreſſibly delighted,
lt confuſed, and dared not raiſe her
'es from the carpet.—Before ſhe left
owntoŋ, ſhe had dreſſed for the day,
ıt now ſhe thought ſome change indiſ-
:nſable, at leaſt in her head dreſs; ſhe
ıſtened, therefore, to her chamber but
uld by no means decide what beſt be-
ıme her.

At length ſhe adjuſted her hair tole-
bly to her ſatisfaction, and her toilet
:ing finiſhed, ſhe went, with a beating

heart, into the drawing-room, where all the company had long been aſſembled; but ſhe felt a ſort of miſt before her eyes, ſo that ſhe could ſcarcely diſtinguiſh one perſon from another.

Lord Miramont's voice, however, ſhe could not miſtake: with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, he approached and took her hand, expreſſing great pleaſure at ſeeing her; but when ſhe tried to ſay ſomething civil in return, ſhe ſpoke too inwardly to be heard.

Lady Wilmington then preſented to her Lord Fontelieu, and Sir Harry Paragon, to whom ſhe courteſied mechanically; for though ſhe had recovered her ſight, ſhe neither ſaw, nor heard any perſon but the Marquis.

At dinner, placed next to him, her compoſure gradually returned; and ſhe had leiſure to view the two other young men.

men.—Lord Fontelieu was rather well-looking; reſembled his mother, but was ſo ſhy and grave, that he hardly opened his lips.—Sir Harry was a pink and white man, perpetually on a broad grin to ſhew his white teeth; with a little ſqueaking voice, he went on rattling, ſaying mere nothings. He ſeemed, however, not to diſplay his fancied attractions in vain; for Lady Elizabeth's glaſſy eyes were rivetted upon him, and ſhe was herſelf unuſually talkative.

Emma ſoon learned, that Sir Harry had other recommendations, beſides thoſe he evidently valued himſelf upon; for he had a very large fortune.—This ſhe ſaw, would, in Lady Elizabeth's opinion, be an equivalent for a title, for which, till now, ſhe had languiſhed. She had, indeed, long thought herſelf extremely ill uſed, that no propoſal had ever yet been made to her.

This had ſoured her temper, never very ſweet, and rendered her ſo impracticable, that her mother daily more and more regretted the loſs of Lady Bell, who, with all her faults, could be extremely agreeable and eaſy to live with.

This, too, had ſtrengthened her partiality for Emma, who was always as attentive to her, as if ſhe had been her child; and often, when vexed by the giddy flights of one daughter, or the ill humour of the other, Lady Wilmington had found conſolation in her.

Lord Miramont, at dinner, and during the evening, divided his attention between his aunt and Emma: he ſeemed ſo unfeignedly happy, that the latter was come to paſs ſome time under the ſame roof as himſelf; ſhewed ſuch eagerneſs to converſe with her, that Emma's own ſatisfaction was greatly increaſed: yet ſhe could not help regretting, that Lady Bell, who

who uſed to be the life and ſpirit of the houſe, was no longer there, and that ſhe ſhould never even hear her name mentioned.

She durſt not enquire after her of the ladies; but this reſerve was unneceſſary with the Marquis. He ſaid, ſhe had left Scarborough, whither, as he had before told Emma, ſhe went immediately after marriage, and was then at Brighthelmſtone; "but," added he, "I intend to talk to Fontelieu about her; he has an eſtate independent of his father; is generous, loves his ſiſter, and, I dare ſay, may be prevailed upon to allow her ſomething; for, till ſhe is of age, ſhe has not a ſixpence; then ſhe will have 20,000l., and after her father's death, nearly as much more.—Her grandmother left her the above-mentioned fortune, which I apprehend was the bait that caught Darnford.—She is a wild, inconſiderate, but ſweet pretty creature, and I certainly

ought not to abuſe her, who am not a very ſteady character myſelf."

Emma rejoiced in his intended application to Lord Fontelieu; for, by what ſhe gathered of the ſituation of Lady Bell, ſhe apprehended her circumſtances were very narrow, and always precarious; as Darnford paſſed his whole time in gaming.

When Emma was retired to her chamber at night, and reflected on the agreeable preſentiments that had filled her breaſt in the morning, ſhe could hardly perſuade herſelf, on finding them ſo ſpeedily realized, that ſhe was not in a dream: but, upon coolly reviewing all that had paſſed, ſhe felt the delightful conſciouſneſs, that ſhe was now actually in the ſame houſe with Lord Miramont, and ſhould be ſo for many days to come.

Now, therefore, or never, could ſhe hope to learn the real ſtate of his ſentiments

in

in regard to her; and she resolved, if the event of this meeting, should not be a clear and satisfactory explanation of them, to follow her father's advice, and obliterate the Marquis from her thoughts.

A fortnight now passed rapidly on, and if she could have forgotten some family chagrins, she would have been almost completely happy.—The distribution of her time exactly suited her inclinations. As she rose early in the morning, she contrived to have a couple of hours to employ with her pen, or her books, before the family was stirring.—As soon as breakfast was over, every fine day, Lord Fontelieu took his mother an airing in his curricle; and she and Lady Elizabeth rode on horseback, attended by Lord Mitamont, and Sir Harry Paragon.—They soon divided into parties, when the former always kept close by her side: the weather, in general, was so favourable to these excursions, that they often ex-

tended them to a great diſtance from home, and returned at a late hour, ſo as only juſt to have time to dreſs for dinner.

The early part of the evening was ſpent in muſic; the Counteſs, formerly, when there was a poſſibility of a competition between Lady Bell and her in talents, never aſked her to play or ſing; but, as Lady Elizabeth could do neither, ſhe was now extremely glad to hear her do both. —Emma, therefore, played upon the piano forte, accompanied by Lord Fontelieu on the violin; and frequently ſung with Lord Miramont and Sir Harry a *trio*, or a *duo* with his Lordſhip, which ſhe certainly preferred.

Cards afterwards ſucceeded, in which the Counteſs, her daughter, and the gentlemen engaged; as, likewiſe, any chance viſitors, which were not many, for the Earl being abſent, Lady Wilmington announced,

nounced, on her arrival in the country, that ſhe did not mean to ſee company in general, but only a very few people, with whom ſhe was not on a formal footing.

Whenever Lord Miramont could eſcape from the card table, he ſeated himſelf by Emma's frame, in which ſhe was working chairs for the Counteſs.—The converſation on theſe occaſions, was to her very intereſting; not that Lord Miramont had any particular talent in that way, though he was naturally lively, but he had always ſomething to communicate; ſomething about which he wiſhed to conſult her; ſeeking to penetrate her ſentiments on every ſubject, and ſeeming anxious to be guided by her taſte, in a thouſand articles relative to his own concerns. But amid all this confidential intercourſe, never a word eſcaped him that ſounded like love.

Yet gradually ſhe perceived a conſiderable change in his humour; it was not half ſo light and gay as when firſt ſhe arrived at Wilmington; but though far from melancholy, it was certainly penſive. Often he was ſo abſent, that he knew not what was paſſing; and then he would fix his eyes inſtantly upon her, till her embarraſſment warned him to withdraw them.

Inſenſibly his manner towards her became more tender; if, accidentally, during their rides, her horſe gave a ſtart, he was inſtantly alarmed; ſometimes in bad roads, he would inſiſt upon leading it himſelf, not truſting to the care of the groom; if ſhe looked pale, or had the ſlighteſt complaint, he could not conceal his uneaſineſs; and if ever ſhe abſented herſelf from the company for any time, his eyes ſparkled with joy when ſhe returned, and he gently reproached her for having ſtayed away.

Lady

Lady Wilmington, whoſe whole ſtock of maternal love had formerly been engroſſed by her youngeſt daughter, and who had always ſhewn leſs partiality to Lord Fontelieu, when he was a boy, than is common with mothers to an only ſon, was not prepared to meet him on his return to England, after an abſence of ſome years, with any warmth of affection; but, finding him, in every reſpect, very different from what ſhe had imagined, ſhe almoſt immediately became fond, as well as proud of him.

Diſappointed in her favourite child; indifferent to Lady Elizabeth; and almoſt hating her Lord; ſhe had felt a ſad vacancy in her heart, which ſhe now thought might be filled by a ſon, whoſe profound reſpect, and delicate attentions, ſoothed her domeſtic chagrins, and gratified her pride.

Scarcely

Scarcely had he arrived, than ſhe repented of the invitation ſhe had ſent to Emma, before ſhe knew that Lord Fontelieu was coming, for fear that he might be captivated by her beauty and accompliſhments, and ſhe had almoſt reſolved to put her off;—when it occurred to her that Lady Elizabeth, conſtantly in the ſociety of young men, would be awkwardly ſituated, without ſome companion of her own ſex and age.

Lady Wilmington could not endure thoſe ſhe called the *native Miſſes*, to which Emma alone was an exception; and, conſidering that it would always be in her power to ſend her away, if ſhe ſaw the leaſt ſymptom of a dawning partiality towards her in her ſon, ſhe adhered to her engagement.

A few days were ſufficient perfectly to tranquilize her mind in this reſpect; for Lord Fontelieu, who was extremely well

well bred, behaved to Emma with that formal ſort of civility which denotes abſolute indifference.

Emma, therefore, was conſidered by her, as an exceeding agreeable addition to her family; and almoſt as one that was indiſpenſable, under the preſent circumſtances.

But Lady Wilmington had too much penetration, as well as experience, not to perceive the predilection of her nephew to this lovely girl: this, however, gave her little concern on his account; for, prepoſſeſſed with the belief that he ſtill wore Lady Fredville's chains, and that he had no inclination to marry, ſhe viewed his behaviour in no other light than as a flirtation *ſans conſequence*, which he would forget as ſoon as he left the country.

Yet,

Yet, as her heart was not bad, ſhe ſometimes queſtioned herſelf, whether ſhe was not acting cruelly by Emma, in ſuffering her, to be conſtantly expoſed to the ſeduction, of ſo faſcinating a man as Lord Miramont? But her knowledge of Emma's virtuous principles re-aſſured her, againſt any apprehenſions of other danger, than *that* which threatened her heart, which, if it ſhould receive a ſlight wound, ſhe relied on her good ſenſe to heal; as, likewiſe, that *this* would prevent her entertaining an idea ſo very abſurd, in Lady Wilmington's opinion, as of Lord Miramont's ever thinking of her as a wife.

Lady Elizabeth, to whom Emma had ſometimes been an object of indifference, and ſometimes of envy and jealouſy, now courted her extremely; not that her ſentiments towards her were more cordial, or benign than formerly; but her preſence was uſeful, and her talents were agreeable.

agreeable. The young men, who were all muſical, could not do without her in their little concerts (Lady Elizabeth herſelf having entirely given up muſic); and they might find Wilmington very dull, if ſhe was no longer there. The poſſibility of Sir Harry's departure, before he had made the much-deſired propoſal, made her tremble; therefore, whenever her mother, annoyed by ſcruples, hinted the propriety of ſending Emma back to Downton, Lady Elizabeth vehemently oppoſed it; and reminded her, that ſhe had promiſed to celebrate her brother's return home by a ball, at which Emma poſitively muſt be preſent.

Lady Wilmington, perhaps, might not have paid much attention to the wiſhes of her daughter, if the latter had not artfully engaged Lord Fontelieu to ſupport them; and if ſhe had not had many reaſons, herſelf, for liking the company of Emma. She, therefore, no longer talked

of

of parting with her; and, to induce Mrs. Mourtray to acquieſce cheerfully with her abſence, ſhe took Emma with her, to pay a morning viſit at Downton; when Mrs. Mourtray, who continued highly delighted with her own little *coterie*, willingly conſented, that her daughter ſhould paſs another fortnight at Wilmington.

In regard to the ball, the Counteſs, not chooſing to be at the expence of giving one in the ſame ſtyle as thoſe of the preceding year, ſhe compromiſed the matter with Lady Elizabeth, by ſettling to have two or three little dances, confined to a ſmall number of perſons, without form or ceremony, which perfectly ſatisfied her, and pleaſed all the party extremely.

Lord Miramont, though he affected, in town, to be in general averſe from dancing, was now one of the moſt indefatigable of dancers, and never failed to engage

engage Emma for his partner; which he could do without, in the leaſt, affronting his couſin, as ſhe was extremely glad to be left at liberty to dance with Sir Harry.

He, however, ſeldom ventured to engage in more than two dances, for fear of fatiguing his delicate perſon, ever the firſt object of his attention; but, as he would afterwards lounge upon a ſopha, with Lady Elizabeth, the reſt of the evening, ſhe was indifferent how little he danced.

A decided flirtation was now eſtabliſhed between this pair, which all her family ſedulouſly encouraged. Indeed, Lord Fontelieu, whoſe manly character deſpiſed ſuch a little effeminate being, would not have been troubled with his company in travelling to England, but with the hope, that he might bring about a match between him and his ſiſter; who, he heard, had been ſo unfortunate in her endeavours

vours to get a husband, that she wou
probably rejoice to accept of Sir Ha
Paragon, with his immense income:-
man as free from vice as from virtu
but who was, in many respects, co
pletely ridiculous.

CHAP. IX.

ONE evening, after Emma had been engaged in a very long converſation with Lord Miramont, during which the words, *I love*, ſeemed to hover on his lips, though an unaccountable *ſomething* ſeemed always to prevent their getting further, ſhe felt her ſpirits ſo much agitated, that, when ſhe retired to her room after ſupper, ſhe could not bring herſelf to go to bed.

To calm this perturbation, ſhe had recourſe to a book; and ſhe had read two hours, when, riſing to undreſs, ſhe obſerved an extraordinary light, in a window oppoſite to her chamber, which ſhe knew belonged to Lord Miramont's apartment.

The old manſion, at Wilmington, was built in a quadrangular form: the whole of

of the South front was appropriated to the family; all their windows faced the lawn; and, over their rooms, the ſervants immediately about their perſons, alſo were lodged: the reſt in a building detached from the houſe. The apartments to the North, facing a long avenue, were ſeldom uſed, excepting when the houſe was very full of company, the furniture of theſe being quite in the old-faſhioned ſtyle, and much the worſe for wear.—The Eaſtern apartments were, in general, allotted to male gueſts; and theſe looked into a ſpacious court, as did thoſe oppoſite to them, where there were ſeveral handſome and commodious bed-chambers and dreſſing-rooms: here Emma was lodged; and adjoining to her's was a ſmall room occupied by an old houſe-keeper, who was laid up with the rheumatiſm; and excepting her, there was not a creature elſe in that quarter.

A lon

A long gallery, beginning from the Southern ſide of the quadrangle, extended all along three ſides of it; but owing to a whim of Lady Wilmington's, who had the door bricked up on the Weſt, becauſe it was near her dreſſing-room, there was no communication between the quarter ſhe inhabited, and that in the occupation of Emma, unleſs by traverſing the whole extent of the gallery.

Emma ſeeing this extraordinary light proceed from Lord Miramont's chamber, which increaſed prodigiouſly as ſhe ſtood watching it, was convinced the room muſt be on fire; for, a very little while before this glare of light ſtruck her, that whole quarter of the quadrangle had been involved in entire darkneſs.

Terrified to death, and well aware, from the arrangement of the family, that no mortal, ſave the old helpleſs houſekeeper, could hear her, if ſhe rang the bell, ſhe flew

flew precipitately along the gallery, ſcreaming out, " Fire, fire !"—the ſmell of this, as ſhe advanced, too well confirming her fears.

A dead ſilence, however, continued: ſhe only heard the echo of her own voice; and, puzzled to know which of the doors ſhe ſaw, belonged to Lord Miramont's chamber, ſhe knocked indiſcriminately at all; but ſtill nobody heard her. She redoubled her cries as her alarm increaſed, till a little ſqueaking voice, which ſhe knew to be Sir Harry's, exclaimed, " Lard! Lard! what's the matter?"

" O! the houſe is on fire!" replied ſhe:—" Ah! Lord Miramont! which is his room?"

" O! ſhocking! horrible!" cried Sir Harry:—" I ſhall either catch my death of cold, or be burned in my bed."

Emma,

Emma, regardleſs of him, continued vociferating, "fire!" with all her might, and thumping violently at a door, which ſhe diſcovered, by the light through the key-hole, to be that of the room (doubtleſs Lord Miramont's) where the fire blazed; then, redoubling her cries at the door of the Baronet, ſhe conjured him to riſe, and haſten to her aſſiſtance.

With horror, indeſcribable, ſhe recollected to have heard the Marquis ſay, that, during his firſt ſleep, the noiſe of a cannon would ſcarcely rouſe him. What then was to be done?—for all her efforts, hitherto, to wake him had been ineffectual. Sick at heart, ſhe exclaimed, "O! my God!—he will be burned!—there is no poſſibility of ſaving him!"

She would have opened the door, but ſhe had the preſence of mind to refrain, for fear the ſudden entrance of air from without, might make the flames rage fiercer within.

At length, juſt as ſhe was hurry[illegible] half frantic, towards Lady Wilmington[illegible] quarter of the houſe, Sir Harry appea[illegible] in the gallery, with a poker in his hand[illegible] and now he added his efforts to her's [illegible] awaken Lord Miramont; but no foo[illegible] did the Baronet ſee the light of the fla[illegible] under the door, than his alarm for h[illegible] ſelf induced him to run off, as faſt as [illegible] ſlender legs could carry him: at that [illegible] ſtant, however, the light, falling full on Lord Miramont's eyes, awoke him, and he returned ſome confuſed anſwer, to Emma's loud exhortations to him to ariſe whilſt, to her unſpeakable delight, ſhe heard him moving out of bed.

She now retreated, in all haſte, that he might, without indelicacy, quit his room directly; and away ſhe flew in queſt of the ſervants. Sir Harry, in the mean while, had run to their rooms, and giving them the alarm, it ſoon became general. Emma met ſome ruſhing towards the gallery, whilſt others haſtened to work the

the fire engine; which, being near at hand, gave hopes that the flames would soon be extinguished.

By this time Lady Wilmington and Lady Elizabeth were roused, and they hurried down stairs. Emma, too, being only about Lord Miramont, whose voice she heard giving directions to the servants, joined them.

In a short time, an account was brought that the fire was put out, after destroying no more than the furniture of Lord Miramont's chamber, and an adjoining closet; the great thickness of the walls, having prevented its spreading further.

During the bustle and confusion of this scene, an unintersted spectator might have found cause for laughter, in the ridiculous *costume* some of the family exhibited, though terror made them wholly unconscious of it.

The Counteſs, who never appeared at any time, till ſhe was dreſſed with the moſt preciſion, retained her uſual dignified air in her night-cap; in other reſpects ſhe and her daughter were very lightly clad, only the latter had taken care of her ſhoulders, having wrapped a flannel petticoat round them.

Emma alone, who had never undreſſed, appeared as uſual.

But the moſt unhappy object in the pearance, was Sir Harry Paragon; he ſhivering in a corner, dreading that formidable *catch-cold* which was ſeldom out of his thoughts:—his teeth were in chatter; the pretty pink bloom of cheeks was totally gone, and, what be leſs eaſily accounted for, his dark brows. His chintz night-gown lined with roſe-coloured ſarſenet, now, alas! afforded him little comfort, for it was very ineffectual

ctual, to keep the cold from his tender nbs.

His apprehenſions of ſome terrible miſhief to his health, in conſequence of eing forced to riſe (as he ſaid) when in ate of perſpiration, made him break ut into the moſt doleful lamentations: nd much as Lady Wilmington wiſhed to ourt him, ſhe could hardly hear with atience, the concern he expreſſed for imſelf, while he ſhewed none for an ccident, which might have been fatal to he whole family.

Lord Miramont, wrapped up in a reat coat, with a handkerchief bound ound his hand, which was a little burned, nly made his appearance for a minute, efore the fire was extinguiſhed; haſtening to the aſſiſtance of his couſin, who ſefully employed all his activity and inelligence, to get it under.

The fire had been occaſioned by the careleſſneſs of Lord Miramont's ſervant, who had left a candle burning on a table in the dreſſing-cloſet, within his lord's chamber.

All danger being now over, and another chamber being prepared for the Marquis, every body retired to reſt: Emma devoutly thanking the Almighty, for having made her the inſtrument, of ſaving her beloved Lord Miramont, from inevitable deſtruction.

After a night of ſuch alarm, it may eaſily be imagined the company did not aſſemble till very late the next day. As Emma was croſſing the hall, Lord Miramont appeared at an oppoſite door; he inſtantly flew to her, and catching her in his arms,—"Charming preſerver of my life," cried he, "excellent creature!—here let me ſwear to you eternal love!"

Emma,

Emma, bluſhing and amazed, gently diſengaged herſelf from his hold; but he ſeized her hand, which he repeatedly kiſſed in deſpite of her reſiſtance. "Forgive this freedom, ſweet Emma," continued he, "but I can no longer reſtrain my feelings;—my full heart will burſt, if not relieved. Oh, I muſt and will tell you, that I love—that I idolize—that I adore you!"

Whatever Emma felt at this moment, ſhe was not able, at leaſt, to ſtammer out more than a few words, expreſſing the ſatisfaction it would have given her, to be of uſe to him; and as ſhe ſpoke, her face was crimſoned over with vermilion.

"Oh, I have things innumerable to ſay to you," cried he; "but I hear voices;—I muſt have leiſure to open my whole heart to you, ſweet Emma: to-night, therefore, when the card party is begun, I will...."

A footman coming by, ſtopped the end of his ſentence, and Emma, all in a tremor, hardly knowing what ſhe did, made the beſt of her way to the breakfaſt-room, whither he followed her in a few minutes.

Only the Counteſs and her daughter were there; but Lord Fontelieu ſoon joined them: and after the firſt ſalutations and mutual congratulations on their late eſcape had paſſed, Lady Wilmington, obſerving ſhe did not ſee Sir Harry, ordered a ſervant to go and tell him breakfaſt was ready.

The ſervant returned with Sir Harry Paragon's reſpects, and that he choſe to take his breakfaſt in bed. The terror, fatigues, and cold of the paſt night, having greatly (as he ſaid) diſordered him.

"Poor creature!" ſaid Lord Miramont, "he really ought to be kept in a box ſtuffed with cotton; and then, Elizabeth, you

you might divide your attention between him and your dormouſe,—fit companions for each other."

"Indeed, couſin, it is monſtrous cruel of you," cried ſhe, angrily, "to joke in this manner; I wiſh you would mind your own buſineſs. As for Sir Harry, he is much to be pitied for the extreme delicacy of his conſtitution; but, becauſe you are as ſtrong as a horſe yourſelf, you never feel for others."

"I am ſure," replied he, "Sir Harry diſpenſes every body elſe from this care in regard to him, his only ſolicitude being for himſelf. Laſt night, during our alarm, the poſſibility of catching cold, and that there was a chance of his travelling *neceſſaire*, and all the apparatus of his toilet, being burned, engaged his moſt anxious thoughts."

Lady Wilmington, desirous to turn off this conversation, started another subject. She mentioned, with great encomiums, the presence of mind and persevering zeal Emma had shewn, at a time when most young people would have been rendered inactive by terror.—"I do believe," cried she, "this house, strong as it is, would have suffered considerably, but for Miss Mourtray's courage and vigilance: and you, Miramont, certainly owe your life to her."

"I well know it," replied he, "and never—never shall I forget it.—What I feel on the occasion, I have, in part, endeavoured to express already to Miss Mourtray; but what I have yet forborne to say," added he, with a significant glance at Emma, "her intelligent mind cannot fail of comprehending."

"Umph!—it is very proper," said Lady Wilmington, "that you should feel grateful;

grateful; but you cannot doubt that Miſs Mourtray's humanity would have been equally active in regard to any body elſe."

"Perhaps not *equally* active," thought Emma.

Lady Elizabeth, who owed Lord Mirmont a grudge for having ridiculed the effeminacy of her lover, meditated giving him a ſide-ſtroke; ſo, turning to Emma, ſhe ſaid, "There is one thing I ſhould like to know; and I wonder it did not ſtrike every body laſt night as very odd!—How came it to paſs, Miſs Mourtray, that you were then completely dreſſed?"

"I had not been in bed, Madam, and was on the point of undreſſing when I ſaw an unuſual light in the window oppoſite to mine."

"Why did you ſit up ſo late?"

" I was reading, Madam."

" How romantic and pretty!—and, then, to crown all, an adventure!"

" Fie, fie, Elizabeth!" ſaid Lady Wilmington, gravely; " what you are pleaſed to call an adventure, and mention as if it had been an agreeable circumſtance, might have been a moſt tragical cataſtrophe."

" Poor Elizabeth!" ſaid Lord Mirmont, ironically ſmiling, " let me recommend to you, to go and look after your little dormouſe—all in good time, I hope you will have the large one as ſnugly in your poſſeſſion."

Lady Elizabeth, with her cheeks paler than uſual with rage, flounced out of the room, ſaying, ſhe did not underſtand him.

Late

Late in the evening Sir Harry ventured to emerge from his retreat: his face was reſtored to its wonted appearance; but his perſon was cloſely buttoned up in a pea-green ſilk *peliſſe*, lined with ſable.—The ſight of him chaſed away part of Lady Elizabeth's ill humour.

Mean while Emma, little heeding what was paſſing, impatiently longed for the entrance of the card-table, as the time was approaching, which promiſed to be deciſive of her fate. The whole day ſhe had thought of nothing but the declaration, ſo long wiſhed for, that the Marquis had made in the morning.

The evening, however, wore away; cards were not named; for the event of the preceding night ſeemed to have unhinged all the company: none of their minds were tuned to harmony; muſic, therefore, was not propoſed.

But

But, at laſt, Lady Wilmington began to to arrange her card party, when Emma trembled for fear Lord Miramont ſhould not be able to excuſe himſelf from playing.

Fortunately, Lady Wilmington had not forgotten the late ſparring ſcene between him and her daughter; and, to prevent any renewal of this, ſhe purpoſely left him out, taking Lord Fontelieu for her own partner, and leaving Lady Elizabeth to Sir Harry.

As ſoon as the rubber was begun, Lord Miramont joined Emma, who, as uſual, ſat working at her frame, near one of the chimnies, far removed from the card-table, which was cloſe to the other: and the drawing-room being ſixty feet long, little apprehenſion could be entertained, that their converſation ſhould be overheard.

No

No ſooner had Lord Miramont taken a ſeat by her ſide, than he ſaid, in a low voice, "I have ſo much to ſay—ſo much to explain, my dear Miſs Mourtray, that I tremble, leſt you ſhould not have patience to attend to me."

"No great fear of that," thought Emma; but ſhe kept ſilent, and he proceeded.

"You little ſuſpect how long I have loved you; for, till lately, I will honeſtly own, I tried to ſuppreſs my inclination. But, almoſt from the beginning of our acquaintance, I felt attracted towards you, by an impulſe difficult to reſiſt; yet certain reaſons, added to a fooliſh prejudice I had imbibed againſt matrimony, determined me to ſmother this growing paſſion, ſo incompatible with my habits of life, and...."

Lord

Lord Miramont pauſed; he ſeemed embarraſſed: but ſoon recovering himſelf, "I know not why," continued he, "I ſhould give you a detail of the progreſs of my ſentiments; therefore I will cut it ſhort, and only add, that I was very near discovering them to you, during our laſt interview at my aunt's, in town. For when I heard you were going into the country, I could ſcarcely forbear throwing myſelf at your feet, and conjure you to ſtay,—and ſtay for my ſake: but, at that inſtant, a moſt cruel recollection ſealed my lips.—You departed, and I became miſerable.—I felt like one of thoſe wretched ghoſts deſcribed in poetry, wandering about in deſpair, becauſe their bodies had not yet received the ſepulchral rites.—Nothing pleaſed—nothing amuſed me.!!

Here Emma raiſed her eyes towards him; thoſe beautiful eyes, ſo expreſſive of her thoughts. He ſeemed to underſtand their language, for he repeated, with

with energy—" Nothing, upon my honour! In this comfortleſs ſtate I remained, till Fontelieu arrived from abroad, and aſked me to come hither.

" After allI have ſaid, I need not tell you, with what joy I accepted an invitation, which would give me an opportunity of ſeeing you. I came, however, without any fixed project how I ſhould act: but how could I dwell under the ſame roof with you, and remain undecided? In ſhort, each day, each hour, you became dearer to me; I found I could no longer live without you; and yet I had a reaſon why I wiſhed to defer explaining myſelf: but the kind intereſt you took in my preſervation, entirely threw me off my guard, and I could no longer retain a ſecret, which, a thouſand times before, had been on the point of eſcaping.—Now, if I may preſume to think I am not indifferent to you; if you will encourage me to hope . . . Ah! ſpeak

my

my beloved Emma!—give me but a look —one look....."

Emma timidly raiſed her bluſhing fac but ſhe could not ſpeak.

He proceeded:—" I know not how am to interpret your ſilence, for your e are averted from me. Having now plained my ſentiments, judge how mo fying it is to me to be forced to add.. His voice faltered; he ſeemed extrem agitated; whilſt ſhe, with mingled al and amazement, ſcarcely ventured breathe, for fear of loſing a word of w was to follow.

" That there is an impediment," tinued he; " a fatal obſtacle..... wh prevents me, at preſent, from da to ſolicit the honour of your ha but....."

" T

" Then why, my Lord," interrupted mma, eagerly; " why, then, hold this proper language to me?"

" Have patience, I conjure you; deareſt iſs Mourtray: the obſtacle I allude to not inſurmountable; it muſt and ſhall conquered; though, I fear, this will t be done without great difficulty.— ould to Heaven I could, with honour, velope to you this myſtery!—But wrong e not, I beg, nor yet yourſelf, by ſup- ing that I ſhould preſume to addreſs u, if my views were not ſtrictly honour- le. Allow me but to hope, that when obſtacle exiſts, you will be mine!— t me but feel ſecure of your heart, and en I ſhall proceed with alacrity, and her I will die, or be your's. Speak, erefore, my deareſt Emma!—let me hear at I have to depend upon."

During the beginning of this conver- ion, Emma could ſcarcely conceal the delightful

delightful ſenſations that aroſe in her mind; but gradually they faded away, to make room for diſtruſt, mortification, and anger. She thought the Marquis trifled with her: if he was not engaged to another, what obſtacle could there be to his marrying? She ſaid, therefore, with an offended air, "What can I ſay, Lord Miramont; what can you expect from me? Surely, not to liſten to this ambiguous language?"

"Good God!—have you a doubt of my honour? If I were free, I would this moment kneel at your feet, and never riſe, till I had engaged your promiſe to be irrevocably mine."

"But, ſince you ſay you are not free, Lord Miramont, it ill becomes you to continue this ſubject; and I poſitively decline hearing any more on it."

Emma

Emma now made a motion to rise, but detained her: "Oh! Heaven!" exclaimed he; "how coldly, how cruelly you speak!—you know not the torture you inflict. Ah! wherefore did you save my life last night, if that life is of no value to you?"

The violence of his emotion alarmed her: she apprehended the card party and his words; and, summoning courage to speak ingenuously, she said, in a mild and softened voice, "your life, certainly, is of no small value to all who know you; but, as your Lordship's situation appears involved in unaccountable obscurity, you must excuse my refusing to engage my affections, while there is a doubt of your being at liberty to solicit them."

"Gracious Powers!" exclaimed he, "what can I say to convince you of the purity of my love? I acknowledge, it would

would have been more reſpectful, but I delayed avowing it, till I had removed the obſtacle to my wiſhes: this was a fixed reſolve; and, I ſolemnly proteſt, I ſhould have adhered to it, had I not met you this morning; when my heart, glowing with tenderneſs and gratitude, could contain itſelf no longer. But, for God's ſake, my beloved Emma, judge of me with your wonted candour and generoſity, and rather pity than blame me. Reſerve, I implore you, that heart, ſo inexpreſſibly dear to me, till I am at liberty to claim it.—Oh! then, how happy I ſhall be!"

Emma, however, though it coſt her a ſevere pang, had the reſolution to remain ſilent; and, riſing, ſhe approached the card table, where, ſitting down by Lady Wilmington, ſhe continued till ſupper.

Never did a countenance exhibit ſtronger marks of vexation and diſappointment

pointment than did that of the Marquis. Emma saw it but too clearly: she herself felt miserable and uncomfortable beyond expression; yet, amid the gloom of her thoughts, self-approbation diffused one consoling ray: "Just so," said she, mentally, "would my father have counselled me to act. However weak I feel, still I have not betrayed the tenderness of my heart to a man, who avowed that he was not free to sue for it. Had I done this, then, indeed, I should have been despicable to myself!"

Lady Wilmington was too acute an observer, not to perceive that something extraordinary had passed between her nephew and her guest; but she prudently forbore to notice it.

But Sir Harry Paragon, in his little squeaking voice, exclaimed, "*Mais mon Dieu!*—what ails you both?—have you made a vow of silence?"

"Miss

"Miſs Mourtray," ſaid Lady Elizabeth, taking upon herſelf to anſwer for her, "feels the effects of her terrible alarm laſt night, and Lord Miramont the *contre coup*."

"It is not at all ſurprizing," ſaid Lord Fontelieu, in his uſual grave manner, "that any of us ſhould look ill and jaded, after our late diſturbance; therefore, if I might preſume to adviſe, we ſhould all retire early to-night."

This motion met with general approbation, and was adopted. During the whole night, however, Emma found it impoſſible to cloſe her eyes. So diſagreeable and unexpected a termination of all the fond hopes ſhe had cheriſhed ſo long, and thought ſo near being realized, filled her with anguiſh and diſappointment.—In vain ſhe racked her brains, to form ſome gueſs, what this impediment might be, which had thus ſtarted up, and which

Lord

Miramont ſaid honour forbade him
)lain. That Lady Fredville was, in
manner, implicated in this, ſhe had
ubt; but *how*, as ſhe was a married
n, ſhe could not conceive.

CHAP. X.

WHILE one event had rapidly been following in ſucceſſion to another, at Wilmington, a plan had been arranging, at Downton, extremely agreeable to Mrs. Mourtray.

The month of October, which had begun ſo fine, was now ending very indifferently, and the cold weather brought on a return of her complaint in her hip: the Colonel, too, was ſeized with the gout; and, as theſe invalids could no longer meet, grievous lamentations echoed through the houſes of each. No mitigation could be procured for their ſufferings, till Miſs Thornley, whoſe thoughts, ever employed for the benefit of others, ſuggeſted to them the idea of going to Bath, for a month or ſix weeks. Both approved

proved the plan; but neither poſſeſſed
e means of executing it.

But this difficulty ſhe was prepared to
nove; for having been for ſome time
arding, out of her little fortune, what
e thought would be ſufficient to fur-
ize her brother and ſiſter, ſome day,
th the preſent of a ſecond-hand poſt-
aiſe, ſhe naturally offered them this
ney, as if it had been their due, to
fray the extraordinary expenſes of a
th expedition.

Without the ſlighteſt ſcruple they con-
ted to avail themſelves of her genero-
y, provided ſhe would prevail upon
eir friend, Mrs. Mourtray, to be of the
rty; when, if Miſs Thornley would
y the houſe-rent, they agreed the two
nilies ſhould club together for their
intenance.

No perſuaſions were neceſſary to induce Mrs. Mourtray to aſſent to this propoſal: the ſtate of her health, alone, ſhe thought juſtified her acceptance of it; but ſhe was ſomewhat embarraſſed what to do concerning her daughter, as ſhe had just conſented that ſhe ſhould prolong her viſit to Lady Wilmington, though ſhe began (eſpecially ſince ſhe had been diſpoſed) to be very anxious for her company.

This Miſs Thornley thought perfectly natural, and that it would be a thouſand pities, not to give this beautiful girl an opportunity of ſeeing, and being ſeen, in ſo gay a place as Bath; whither, ſhe ſuppoſed, ſhe would infinitely prefer going, than to remain in ———ſhire; and Mrs. Mourtray was of the ſame opinion.

This whole ſcheme was no ſooner ſettled by theſe Ladies than Peter was diſpatched to Wilmington. Early in the morning,

orning, therefore, after Emma had paſſed
s (before mentioned) a moſt wretched
ght, ſhe received a note from her mo-
er, deſiring her, with proper apologies
Lady Wilmington, to come home the
y following, as ſhe had reſolved that
ey ſhould accompany the Thornleys to
ath, where a houſe already was taken
r their reception.

That the hopes of giving her a little
muſement, had partly determined her to
move thither, beſides thinking that the
aters might do her good, as ſhe had a
ying gout about her; and, as ſhe pur-
oſed ſetting out on her journey the end
f the week, ſhe wiſhed to have Emma
Downton to prepare for it.

The vexation Emma felt before, was
ot a little heightened by the contents of
is note. She was not only, in the moſt
itical moment of her life, to leave the
Marquis in diſtreſs and unhappy; but

alſo to go, at a time when ſhe was not perfectly ſatisfied with him, and with her mind perplexed and uneaſy, to Bath; to mix in frivolous amuſements!

Obedience, however, to her mother ſeemed to her indiſpenſable; and, conformably to this, ſhe anſwered her note. —With a heavy heart ſhe went down to breakfaſt, at which the gentlemen did not appear; for as the day was too bad for the ladies to take their uſual exerciſe out of doors, the former went out a ſhooting, Sir Harry excepted, who preferred remaining all the morning in his bed.

Emma now informed Lady Wilmington, of the ſummons ſhe had received to return to Downton; and not daring to ſpeak much, leſt ſhe ſhould burſt into tears, ſhe gave her Ladyſhip her mother's note to read.

The

The Counteſs, as ſhe returned it, only ſaid, " Very well; you ſhall have the carriage."

She was not, however, ſo indifferent in this matter as ſhe appeared; for the fire ſcene, and ſome glances ſhe had caſt on her nephew and Emma during the intereſting ſcene, by the tent ſtitch frame, had as clearly developed to her what was going on, as if ſhe had heard the whole; though ſhe could not at all account, for the melancholy looks of the lovers at ſupper.

This morning ſhe had already been ruminating, on what pretext ſhe ſhould ſend Emma away; when, to her agreeable ſurprize, ſhe found herſelf relieved from further ſolicitude.

But Lady Elizabeth, who had not been quite out of her ſulky fit, immediately aſſumed apparent good humour, for again

all the inconveniencies of Emma's de
ture ſtruck her forcibly; ſo, with affe
ſweetneſs, ſhe ſaid, "Muſt you, ind
go, dear Emma? Is it abſolutely nece
you ſhould accompany Mrs. Mourn
Bath?"

"Certainly," ſaid Lady Wilming
ſternly: "do you ſuppoſe Miſs Mou
would let her mother, who is ſick
without her?"

"Why, I thought theſe Thom
were going with her."

"*You* thought, indeed! Pray, k
your thoughts to yourſelf."

Poor Emma ſat confounded at th
haviour of the Counteſs, but ſpoke n

The dinner being on the table b
the ſportſmen appeared, Emma neve
changed a word with the Marquis

while they were at table, Lady Wilmington mentioned, as if by accident, Emma's approaching departure; Lord Miramont was at that inſtant taking a glaſs of wine from a ſervant, but he ſpilled half of it over the cloth, and his face became as pale as death.

"Lard! lard!" cried Sir Harry, "how nervous ſhooting makes people! Will you ſmell my *Eau de Cologne?*"

"What the devil do you mean?" cried Lord Miramont in a rage, vexed that his confuſion ſhould be noticed."

"Me! nothing at all, I am ſure," anſwered the Baronet, alarmed.—Silence then enſued; but Lord Miramont could not ſwallow another mouthful."

Emma, whoſe agitation was little inferior to his, tried in vain to keep away a riſing ſigh, and to affect a ſhew of cheer-

fulneſs; but the effort was beyond her ſtrength, and the moment the company roſe from the table, ſhe haſtened to her chamber; where a ſhower of tears relieved and enabled her, in the evening, to appear in the drawing-room, with tolerable compoſure.

As ſoon as tea was over, the Countſs preſſed her to ſing. Ill as her ſpirits were attuned to harmony, politeneſs, and the fear of diſobliging, induced her to comply.

The long drawing-room, where Lady Wilmington and her company ſat every evening, opened, by large folding doors in its centre, into a circular muſic room; but Lady Wilmington never in cold weather, left her ſtation by the fire-ſide in the great room, where ſhe could hear the muſic as well, as in that where it was performed.

This

This evening ſhe ſat down to cards earlier than uſual, again leaving her nephew out of her party; and Emma, having finiſhed ſinging, was gathering together her muſic books, when Lord Miramont, who alone remained in the room, preſſed her to ſing with him a charming duo of Jackſon's, with words borrowed, in part, from a little piece called *The Change*, in Cowley's *Miſtreſs*.

"Love in thy eyes for ever plays,
He in thy ſnowy boſom ſtrays,
He makes thy roſy lips his care,
And walks the mazes of thy hair.
Love dwells in ev'ry outward part,
But, ah! he never touch'd thy heart!
How diff'rent is my fate from thine;—
No outward marks of love are mine!
My brow is clouded by deſpair,
And Grief, Love's bitter foe, is there.
But, deep within my glowing ſoul,
He reigns and rules without controul."

Emma could ſcarcely reſtrain her emotion whilſt ſhe ſung; conſcious, that her

voice, did not accord more perfectly with that of Lord Miramont (full of the tenderest expreſſion), than did her heart.

When the duo ceaſed, he ſaid, with a mournful air, "How admirably do their words expreſs our ſituation relative to each other!—*But, ah! he never touches thy heart!*—No, no; ſuch happineſs is not mine; or elſe, Emma, you would not depart and leave me in deſpair!"

Emma, who could ill contend with her own feelings, which hitherto, with the utmoſt difficulty, ſhe had concealed, was ſo overwhelmed by this reproach, that her tears, in deſpite of herſelf, ſtole down her cheeks as ſhe made a motion towards the door.

"What!" cried he, ſeizing her hand, "you will leave me, then! Nothing I can ſay has power to move you!"

"Why,

"Why, why do you ſay this, Lord Miramont?" ſaid ſhe, weeping, and holding her hand before her eyes: "why diſtreſs me thus? But let me go, I entreat."

"Say, then, one kind word—Oh! my Emma, ſpeak to me—ſave me from diſtraction!"

"What can I ſay?—You know I go to-morrow, becauſe I muſt obey my mother; but, be ſatisfied, my beſt wiſhes will remain with you—If they can make you happy!—Oh! then—."

She could not proceed—"Do you, indeed, wiſh me happy?" ſaid Lord Miramont, preſſing her hand to his lips: "confeſs, then, do, my beloved Emma, that I am dear to you!"

She ſpoke not, but her increaſed emotion encouraged him to exclaim—"Yes love

love me: yes, I am ſure you love me—your own ſenſibility betrays, what your cold prudence wiſhes to conceal."

Emma, too ſenſible of the truth of this, did not attempt to deny it. "My reſerve," ſaid ſhe, "you would have had no cauſe to complain of, but for your extraordinary communication laſt night: nay, God knows, whether I am not committing a ſin, even to liſten to you, ignorant as I am—."

"No, upon my honour," interrupted he, "you commit none; the barrier is one that can, and ſhall be removed."

"Well, then, as we are now going to part," continued ſhe, "I will fairly tell you, that if my heart muſt not be your's, it ſhall never belong to any other.—This declaration, muſt convince you what my ſentiments are; and now forbear to mention

tion this ſubject any more, unleſs that moment arrives, when you can aſſure me that you are free."

"And that moment ſhall ſpeedily arrive, I ſwear, by Heaven.—I will go to town immediately, and never attempt to ſee you again, till I can openly, my ſweet Emma, declare to the whole world, that I adore you.—But do not be offended, while any incertitude exiſts, as to the ſucceſs of my undertaking, if I requeſt you to keep an inviolable ſecrecy, as to what has paſſed between us.—Believe me, this is of the utmoſt importance to ſecure *my*, let me be ſo vain to ſay *our*, happineſs. Much adroitneſs will be neceſſary, and the leaſt ſuſpicion, at preſent, of my view, would infallibly fruſtrate its ſucceſs."

"I ſhall certainly avoid mentioning circumſtances ſo ſingular," anſwered ſhe, "excepting

"excepting to my mother; with her I can have no reserve."

"Then you will undo me!" cried he warmly; "for though I esteem and respect Mrs. Mountray, as your mother; I cannot consent to trust her in this instance."

"I detest mystery," said Emma; "it would be unpardonable in me to practice it towards her."

"Oh, no; indeed you mistake: consider, that if one inadvertent word might ruin all my hopes of happiness, what you risk? Let me, then, beseech you, my dearest Emma, to be silent, till you hear from me.—Be persuaded, I shall never rest a moment, till I am able to explain my intentions clearly: what difference, then, can it make, whether she hears of this affair, a little sooner or later?"

Emma,

Emma, though far from being convinced by Lord Miramont's reaſons, reluctantly (as he continued to urge it) gave the promiſe he deſired.—And now ſhe had gone too far, to be either able, or perhaps willing, to diſguiſe from him, any part of her ſentiments.

To reſtrain, in ſome degree, his rapturous behaviour, ſhe returned to the drawing-room, and ſeated herſelf at her frame; only, however, pretending to work; for inſenſibly he drew from her a relation, of the riſe and progreſs of a paſſion, that had ſo long filled her boſom.

Although this did not inform him of much, that he had not before ſurmiſed, yet it gave him inconceivable delight.—Reciprocal aſſurances of unalterable affection paſſed between them, and they did not ſeparate, 'till the ſupper was announced, when he ſoftly whiſpered, at parting,

parting—"Be ſilent, and faithful!—I ſha
not venture to write to you."

But when ſhe retired for the nig
and reviewed the paſt occurrences,
regretted, that ſhe had ſo ſpeedily
tracted, the prudent reſolves ſhe had ma
in a calmer moment. She blamed h
ſelf, for having been ſo explicit with
man, who, if his conduct had been c
rect, could have had nothing to conc
"Alas!" ſaid ſhe, "if my father h
witneſſed my imprudence, how much
would have been hurt!"—The raſh p
miſe, too, that Lord Miramont had
torted from her, in regard to her moth
preſſed heavily on her ſpirits.

She ſcarcely doubted, that Lady Fr
ville was to be the arbitreſs of Lord
ramont's fate; and with a ſigh ſhe
flected, that if the whole happineſs of
life, depended on ſo artful a perſon, m
precari

ecarious, indeed, were her hopes!—Yet,
id theſe chagrins, ſhe was ſoothed by
e pleaſing idea, that Lord Miramont
ſſionately loved her, and was reſolutely
nt, on conquering every obſtacle be-
een them.—Nor can it be doubted,
it the inherent failing in her character
nity) received ſome gratification, in
ving atchieved ſuch a conqueſt; as,
ewiſe, in having triumphed over that
ted diſlike to marriage, which he had
often expreſſed.

The carriage was ordered to be ready
mediately after breakfaſt, which was
convey Emma home. Refreſhed by
ne ſleep, ſhe met the party in the
akfaſt-room with tolerable cheerfulneſs,
did Lord Miramont, certain that he was
loved.

But Lady Wilmington had aſſumed
e of her moſt auſtere looks: this did
, however, diſcourage her nephew,
from

from announcing to her, that he was
der the neceſſity, of going immediat
to London.

" So!" cried ſhe, colouring with reſe
ment, " this is a mighty ſudden reſo
tion of your Lordſhip's: did you ſet
it in the muſic-room laſt night?"

" I ſettled it, Madam!" returned
coldly: " this morning, having b
neſs—."

" Oh! do not trouble yourſelf with
explanations," interrupted ſhe; " it wou
indeed, be too much vanity in us, to
poſe that you would ſtay here, after M
Mourtray's departure."

Emma coloured deeply; but Lord
ramont, without noticing this cut, ſet
talents at work, to ſooth his aunt into g
humour; in which, probably, he wo
have ſucceeded, if ſhe had not anew b
ruſ

called by Sir Harry Paragon's declaring, that the country now was become insupportable, the weather being so very damp; protesting, that he lived in constant terror of its pernicious effects on his constitution; and though he should be in despair to quit the charming society at Wilmington, he apprehended, he should be obliged to tear himself away, to breathe a milder air, more analogous to the extreme delicacy of his *poitrine*.

This speech, crushing at once all the agreeable hopes both mother and daughter had entertained, imprinted an air of mortification on their faces, which they could not disguise. But Lady Elizabeth, addressing the Baronet, said, with a tender languor, "Can you have the heart to leave us, Sir Harry?"

"Indeed, Ma'am," replied he, "I shall leave my heart behind: my person," continued he, surveying himself with complaisance,

plaiſance in a glaſs oppoſite to him—"my perſon will be all that will depart."

"Oh! both are ſo happily adapted to each other," ſaid Lord Miramont, "that it would be barbarous to ſeparate them."

"I perfectly concur in this opinion," ſaid Lady Wilmington, with an approving ſmile at her nephew.

"Your Lordſhip is exceſſively obliging, indeed," ſaid Sir Harry; "and ſince your Ladyſhip honours me ſo far as to wiſh my ſtay, I will try and contend a little longer with this inclement weather."

This point ſettled, the Counteſs, duly weighing contingencies, thought it as well to part with Emma on civil terms; ſhe therefore expreſſed the pleaſure ſhe had received in her viſit, and her regret that it was ended.

Lady

Lady Elizabeth muttered ſomething to the ſame effect; but, being now ſecure of Sir Harry's ſtay, ſhe ſaw her depart with perfect indifference. Lord Fonteroy was not a man of many words, yet he exerted himſelf to ſay a few civil things, and as he handed her to the carriage, the Marquis was prevented from taking further leave of her, than by a tender preſſure of her hand.—A few hours afterwards, he alſo left Wilmington.

Emma found her mother forgetting her complaints, in buſily preparing for this delightful jaunt to Bath. Fortunately, ſhe was ſo much engroſſed by her own affairs, that ſhe had not leiſure to aſk her daughter many queſtions, concerning what had paſſed during their ſeparation.

Emma ſecretly rejoiced at this; nevertheleſs ſhe repined at the obligation ſhe

ſhe was under, of concealing from her the proſpect, which, though ſhe yet ſaw it only through a miſt, dazzled her eyes with its luſtre. From all painful reflection ſhe hoped, however, ſoon to be relieved; having, with the ſanguine diſpoſition of youth, diſmiſſed her fears, and cherished a firm belief, that Lord Miramont could not fail of conquering the myſterious obſtacle, which, at firſt, had given her ſo much alarm.

"Bleſs my heart!" cried Mrs. Mourtray, as ſoon as ſhe, her daughter, and maid were ſeated in the chaiſe that was to convey them to Bath—"Bleſs my heart! what a memory I have! I had nearly forgot to tell you, that Lord Clanmorton—."

"Who do you ſay, Mamma?" interrupted Emma.

"Why,

"Why, Sydney that was, now Lord Clannarmon. I thought you knew his mother was dead. Well, he called upon me t'other day, and was a good deal diſappointed at not ſeeing you. I aſſure you, he is much richer than I thought he would be: he has a very handſome fortune. But what do you think he has done?"

"Something good, I dare ſay," replied Emma.

"Good, indeed!" cried Mrs. Mourtray; "for, not content with dividing, with Fitzaubert, the half of a large ſum his mother left, who, it ſeems, was a great miſer, and to her laſt moment, inflexibly refuſed to ſee her eldeſt ſon, though Sydney took him to Florence with him; I ſay, not content with this donation, I underſtand, from Colonel Thornley, who knows every thing, for Lord Clannarmon did not ſay a word to me of all

this, that he means to ſhare his whole income with his brother, who is to live with him, or not, as he chooſes."

"Generous, noble-minded man!" exclaimed Emma.

"Ay; all this is mighty well," ſaid Mrs. Mourtray; "but, after all, unneceſſary: one half that he has done would have been quite ſufficient."

Emma did not chooſe to controvert her mother's notions on this point; ſo ſhe aſked, if Lord Clannarmon had ever been able, to learn any intelligence of her brother.

"Ah! no!"—anſwered Mrs. Mourtray, with a ſigh:—"God knows what is become of that poor, dear boy!"

A ſhort ſilence enſued; when, ſuddenly, Mrs. Mourtray broke it, ſaying,—

"Do

"Do you know that Lord Clanmarmon did not look at all ugly t'other day: I am ſurprized I ever thought him ſo!"

Emma ſmiled, gueſſing the cauſe of this revolution in her ſentiments; and her mother proceeded developing them.

"The Colonel," ſaid ſhe, "thought him quite well-looking; and he almoſt perſuaded me to detain his Lordſhip, and ſend for you home."

"So!" thought Emma; "Chowles uſed to be the oracle: now it is the Colonel."

Then, addreſſing her mother, ſhe expreſſed her thanks and ſatisfaction, that her good ſenſe had prevented her doing ſo extraordinary a thing; and, to give a turn to the converſation, ſhe talked of Bath, and its amuſements; but ſhe eaſily

perceived, that Colonel Thornley had infuſed into her mother's head, a wiſh of having Lord Clannarmon (whom ſhe had deſpiſed as Mr. Sydney) for her ſon-in-law.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

MRS. MOURTRAY and Emma arrived at Bath the beginning of November, where they found Colonel, Mrs. and Miſs Thornley, ſettled in a tolerable good houſe, in the new buildings, near Laura Place, and extremely glad of the arrival of ſuch an addition to their party.

The travellers were ſcarcely recovered from their journey, before Miſs Thornley produced a liſt of what ought to be done, in the way of amuſement, for a fortnight to come.

Mrs. Mourtray liſtened to this with avidity, and ſmiled acquieſcence; but Emma was in too anxious a ſtate of mind not to ſhrink, in ſecret, from entering this career of frivolous pleaſure; yet, as ſhe could aſſign no motive for her re-

pugnance, ſhe was forced to prepare for it.

The day after her journey, as ſhe entered the parlour, ſhe heard Colonel Thornley, who, with all his good humour, was a complete male goſſip, ſay, "And ſo, as I was telling you, Ma'am, he met an expreſs on the road, ſent by Lady Fredville, to inform him how ill ſhe was; and ſo he hurried on at ſuch a rate, to town, that he killed a horſe by ſover fatigue."

"Bleſs me!" cried Mrs. Mourtray; "and are you ſure this is true?"

"I know it to be a fact," replied he, with a look of ſelf-importance.

Emma liſtened to this diſcourſe in the utmoſt aſtoniſhment; but ſuſpended her belief, though ſhe could not ſuppreſs ſome degree of inquietude.

Preſently

Preſently after the Colonel, who had taken up the newſpaper, all at once exclaimed, "Oh, oh!—here is a rare piece of news!"

"What, what?" eagerly aſked Mrs. Mourtray.

"Oh! it is nothing of much conſequence to the public," replied he, "though very intereſting to ſome folks, I'll warrant.—'Tis nothing more, than that Lord Viſcount Fredville lies dangerouſly ill, at his houſe in Park Lane."

"Pſhaw! who cares for that!" ſaid Mrs. Mourtray.

Emma now felt an oppreſſion at her heart: a vague idea obtruded itſelf upon her, that, if he were to die, this event might create an alteration in Lord Miramont's intentions. Leſs qualified than ever to ſhare in amuſement, it was with

infinite reluctance that ſhe ſuffered herſelf to be dragged that evening to the rooms, and the night following to the play; nor was ſhe, in the leaſt, gratified by the admiration ſhe excited, her thoughts being otherwiſe engaged.

Ten days had now paſſed ſince ſhe left Wilmington, and yet ſhe had received no tidings of the Marquis; but, though her impatience increaſed, ſhe was ſenſible ſhe had no right to be diſappointed, as he had ſaid he would not write.

One morning, while the family were ſitting at breakfaſt, the Colonel mentioned that Lord Fredville was dead:—"This paper ſays," continued he, "that he died after a very ſhort illneſs; and here, a little lower, is a fling at Lord Miramont, which I will read to you:—*A certain young Marquis, who has, of late, been more than ever aſſiduous in paying his homage to a certain Viſcounteſs, is obſerved to drive*

drive his curricle with renovated ſpirits, within theſe few days. Ay, ay!" added the Colonel; "he will not find it very difficult, to conſole the fair widow."

Emma, who was holding a toaſt to the fire for her mother, now let it fall into the cinders. Mrs. Mourtray exclaimed at her awkwardneſs, without having the leaſt ſuſpicion of the cauſe that produced it; whilſt the former, under pretence that ſhe was heated by ſtanding cloſe to the fire, flew to the window for air.

But the Colonel, who piqued himſelf on his penetration, followed her:—"Surely," whiſpered he, "this paragraph intereſts you, Miſs Mourtray; for you look as pale as death?"

"Me! Sir!" cried Emma, forcing herſelf to ſpeak; "how ſhould it intereſt me?"

" Nay, that's more than I can tell; but I beg pardon: I have no right, I know, to enquire into young Ladies ſecrets."

Emma, however, ſoon recovered her compoſure; for ſhe reflected, after the firſt ſhock, how abſurd it was to be vexed either by a newſpaper ſquib, or by the Colonel's ſurmiſes, who had no acquaintance with Lord Miramont.

The Colonel now, in the courſe of the following days, frequently mentioned Lord Miramont and Lady Fredville, merely to watch, the effect the ſound of their names had upon Emma, who never could, on theſe occaſions, avoid bluſhing, or turning pale.

Confirmed, therefore, in his ſuſpicions, he imparted them to Mrs. Mourtray, who aſſured him he was quite miſtaken; but as he pertinaciouſly ſupported his opinion,

opinion, ſhe ſaid, half angry, "Indeed, my good Colonel, you have very ſtrange fancies ſometimes, I muſt ſay; and this is one of them."

"My deareſt Madam," ſaid the Colonel, "why will you ſay this? By Heaven!—to hear you talk, any body would imagine I was a driveler; but I know well enough what I ſay, I promiſe you; and I have fifty times remarked, that your daughter never hears Lord Miramont's name without change of colour."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Mrs. Mourtray, not at all pleaſed that another ſhould plume himſelf on the diſcovery of a ſecret, thereby implying a want of penetration in herſelf:—"Good Lord! you do not, ſurely, pretend to be better acquainted with my own daughter than I am myſelf?—and I tell you, poſitively, ſhe does not care a ſtraw for the Marquis of Miramont."

"She will not venture, I believe, to ſay ſo," anſwered the Colonel, whoſe choler was rouſed by contradiction.

"She never deceived me in her life," cried Mrs. Mourtray, warmly, "and never will deceive me."

"Oh! mighty fine!—as if young girls always confeſſed their follies!" cried he: "however, it is no buſineſs of mine, though I am not ſo eaſily duped as ſome folks;" and he bounced out of the room.

"Mrs. Mourtray, much ruffled, repaired to her daughter's chamber:—"That abſurd man, below," cried ſhe, "pretends, and, in defiance of all I can ſay, perſiſts in aſſerting, that you are violently in love with Lord Miramont.—He made me quite angry, being very certain, my dear Emma, that, if you had the

e leaſt partiality for him, you would ıve told me ſo directly."

Emma, exceſſively diſtreſſed by this ark of her mother's confidence in her ıcerity; yet, bound by her promiſe to ord Miramont, to make no communica- ons of any kind, could only reply—" I iſh to deſerve your good opinion, my ar Mamma; and you may be certain, henever I have any thing material to mmunicate, you will be the firſt perſon whom I ſhall mention it. You know, is generally ſuppoſed, that Lord Mira- ont means to marry Lady Fredville."

" Well, that does not prove," ſaid rs. Mourtray, ſtruck with the altered untenance and tremulous voice of her ughter—" well, that does not prove, at you may not have been captivated ith him?—You were a long while to- ther in the ſame houſe, and, for what I ow, he may have been flirting with you

you all that time.—Pray tell me, was it ſo?"

To this home queſtion, Emma, more and more embarraſſed, could only give an evaſive anſwer. She therefore reminded her mother, that Lady Elizabeth Fontelieu being at Wilmington when ſhe was there, of courſe, the three young men's attentions had been divided between them both.

Mrs. Mourtray ſeemed tolerably ſatisfied with this explanation, and dropped the ſubject.

But the Colonel, from a propenſity which he called love of fun, frequently renewed his raillery on the ſcore of Lord Miramont; though his good-natured ſiſter, who ſaw how much it pained Emma, did all ſhe could to ſtop him. Mrs. Thornley, too, in her drawling way, ſometimes

ſaid

id—" La! Colonel, how can you keep arping on this ſilly joke."

He was not, however, to be diſcou-ged; and Mrs. Mourtray always thought erſelf obliged to repel his inſinuations: ence, whenever they were alone, an rgument aroſe between them; and, ough ſhe reſolved to controvert his pinion, right or wrong, generally, be-ore they ſeparated, he infuſed ſome de-ree of doubt and diſtruſt into her mind.

Mrs. Mourtray, therefore, if ever Em-na declined going out, would caſt an in-uiſitive eye upon her, and obſerve, how ery odd it was, that ſhe ſhould love to nope at home: ſo that Emma, to avoid eing teazed, was conſtrained to fly about herever her gay companions choſe to o, though never leſs diſpoſed to be muſed with any thing.

Her

Her troubles, too, were increaſed at this time, by the aſſiduities of a Mr. Irvine, a man of faſhion and large fortune, who perſecuted her with his addreſſes, notwithſtanding ſhe peremptorily, though civilly, declined receiving them.

The month of November was now drawing to a concluſion, and yet ſhe had heard nothing of Lord Miramont! All her reliance on his love and honour could not quiet her apprehenſions that, forgetting her, he had again renewed his attachment to Lady Fredville.

Late one evening, as ſhe was ſitting alone in the parlour, penſive and ſad, expecting the return of the family (who had excuſed her going with them to a card party), a letter was brought to her, which ſhe only by the ſeal knew to come from Lord Miramont, for the addreſs was almoſt illegibly written. This circumſtance terrified her ſo much, that ſhe had hardly

hardly courage to open it: panting for breath, at length ſhe broke the ſeal, and, with trembling hands ſhe unfolded the paper, but her agitation increaſed whilſt ſhe read the following lines.

——— *Hotel, Nov.* 29, 17—

"My beloved Emma,

"I am juſt arrived here in ſuch a ſtate of wretchedneſs and diſtraction, that I ſcarcely know what I am doing—that... but why rave at others, when it is my own curſed folly which has undone me? All this time, this endleſs time ſince we parted, have I been hoping and expecting that each returning day would end my miſery; and that I might be able, before the cloſe of it, to fly to you, my Emma, ſole object of my love, dearer to me than life itſelf! Inſtead of which, ſo far from having advanced in my buſineſs, I am now ſunk deeper than ever in deſpair.

"My

"My brain ſeems on fire—I am certainly very ill: I was ſo before I left town, but I determined to ſee you. I ſaw by the newſpapers that you were here: yet, now, I am unable even to call upon you, though I have a thouſand things to ſay.—All my thoughts, all my hopes, are clouded.—Do not, however, I conjure you, ceaſe to love and to pity me, for I ſwear by Heaven I will yet be your's, or die. I have ſuch a raging head-ache, that I can only add, that I am,

"Your moſt faithful and devoted

"MIRAMONT."

The contents of this letter overwhelmed Emma with grief and anxiety, though it entirely diſſipated her doubts of Lord Miramont's fidelity.

There was an air of truth in every line of this tender epiſtle, that could not poſſibly be miſtaken; and her ſolicitude, now, for his health, made her dwell little upon her

r diſappointment, on learning, that the tal myſterious barrier to all her hopes, d reſiſted his endeavours to overthrow it.

Senſible, that it would be utterly impoſſible for her to calm her flurried ſpirits, efore the return of her friends, ſhe bade e ſervant ſay, that ſhe had a pain in her ce, and was gone to bed; whither, in ct ſhe went, though not to ſleep, for e paſſed the whole night abſorbed in iſery.

However, not to alarm her mother, ſhe roſe, and appeared at the uſual hour in e parlour the following morning: but, efore ſhe had even ſhut the door, the olonel, clapping his hands, exclaimed, —"Great news! great news, Miſs Mourray! Lord Miramont arrived here yeſterday evening; but whether for your ſake r Lady Fredville's, admits of doubt: for ey ſay ſhe is coming after him as faſt as

as poſſible, and a houſe is already taken for her."

Emma, who was at that moment perfectly eaſy about Lady Fredville, forced a ſmile upon her countenance, whilſt ſhe ſaid, "Dear Sir! can it be doubtful to *you*, who are ſo well informed on all ſubjects, what brings Lord Miramont hither?"

"Faith, I can't pretend to decide for others;" ſaid the Colonel, "but, in my opinion, a young woman is far better than an old one."

One of Emma's greateſt vexations at preſent was, that ſhe had no means of informing herſelf of the ſtate of Lord Miramont's health.—Three long tedious days had now paſſed ſince the receipt of his letter, but, ſituated as ſhe was, to enquire after him was impracticable, and ſhe

ſhe really felt ſo diſordered herſelf, that ſhe could not go into the world where ſhe might have gathered caſual intelligence; and all this while ſhe was obliged to conceal her anxiety, and to wait with patience till he himſelf ſhould ſend to her.

On the third evening, as ſhe was making tea in the drawing-room, Doctor G— came to make a friendly viſit to Mrs. Thornley, who had a decided partiality for all the medical tribe. Having been ſlightly indiſpoſed for ſome days, ſhe had, in the morning, hinted a wiſh to ſee him. When he arrived, ſhe gently reproached him for having deſerted her.

He pleaded, in his excuſe, the multitude of patients he had to attend; adding, "It was really impoſſible for me, Madam, to call upon you this morning, for I was engaged in a conſultation for a young nobleman, who is very ſeriouſly ill."

Emma

Emma ſuſpended filling the cups—a cold ſhiver came over her—her mouth half opened, as if ſhe wiſhed to ſpeak, but the words died on her tongue.

Too ſoon, however, ſhe learned who this nobleman was, for the Colonel, as curious as herſelf, though not prompted by the ſame intereſt, eagerly enquired.

"A very fine young man, indeed!" replied the Doctor, "and no ſmall favourite with the ladies. If he ſhould die, there is a fair widow here, who, I really believe, will loſe her ſenſes. I am juſt come from her."

"Well, well; but you have not told us his name," cried the Colonel.

"It is Lord Miramont."

Emma, who had preſaged whom he was going to name, no ſooner found her fears

ears realized, than ſhe ſunk back in her chair.—A miſt ſpread itſelf before her eyes, and her heart ſickened ſo much, that ſhe would have fallen, if Miſs Thornley, who ſaw her ſituation, had not run to her aſſiſtance; and holding ſome aromatic vinegar to her noſe, prevented her from fainting. "The heat of the room has overcome Miſs Mourtray," ſaid ſhe: and Emma, being a little recovered, was able, with Miſs Thornley's help, to leave the room.

Mrs. Mourtray followed her; and though Colonel Thornley was too good-natured, not to be concerned for Emma's ſufferings, he could not forbear giving her mother a ſignificant wink, as much as to ſay, "I hope, now, you are convinced what I told you is true."

Emma, having taken ſome drops, aſſured her mother, and her kind aſſiſtant, that ſhe now felt quite well; and, in a few minutes,

minutes, accompanied them back to the drawing-room.

She found the Doctor engaged in anſwering queſtions put to him by the Colonel, reſpecting Lord Miramont's illneſs; and, though every word he ſpoke was a dagger to her heart, yet being deſirous to learn every particular, as no torment, in her opinion, equalled ſuſpence, ſhe tried to fortify her mind to hear the worſt, without betraying the intereſt ſhe felt.

Doctor G——, who either had not noticed her ſudden indiſpoſition, or, if he had, never dreamed that he had innocently been the cauſe of it, went on, addreſſing the Colonel—"Why, as I before ſaid, it is difficult to decide; for when I ſaw him firſt, which was the night he arrived, I found him in a high fever: but, in my opinion, his diſorder, now, is chiefly

chiefly on his ſpirits—ſome mental diſturbance."

Emma ſighed, but ſpoke not. Miſs Thornley, who ſeemed to penetrate her thoughts, and to relieve her apprehenſions, if poſſible, ſaid, "I hope, Sir, Lord Miramont, though ill, is not, at leaſt, in danger."

"His ſituation, certainly, Madam, is alarming; but, as he is young and naturally ſtrong, I hope, without being too ſanguine, that he may recover, provided this uneaſineſs on his mind is removed:" And as he finiſhed theſe words, he bowed, and retired with Mrs. Thornley, who wiſhed, to conſult him on ſome imaginary complaints which worried her.

Emma's ſudden indiſpoſition, had very much ſtaggered Mrs. Mourtray's belief in her indifference; indeed, almoſt con-

vinced her of the contrary; but ſeeing that ſhe ſtill looked extremely pale, ſhe made no comments on what had paſſed; only, with an unuſual coldneſs in her manner, ſhe, at an early hour, recommended to her to go to bed, which counſel her daughter readily followed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

EXHAUSTED by having paſſed many ſleepleſs nights, Emma, notwithſtanding the additional load of ſorrow that oppreſſed her, for a ſhort time forgot the cruel intelligence ſhe had heard, but awakened to feel it the more acutely.

Early in the morning Mrs. Mourtray came into her chamber, to enquire after her health, but without much ſhew of cordiality—chagrin and ill humour were marked on her countenance: "I am come," ſaid ſhe, "to enquire whether you chooſe to retain this unaccountable reſerve with your mother, or to act ingenuouſly with me, as I have a right to expect from you?"

She pauſed, whilſt Emma, who trembled as ſhe heard this preface, was too confuſed to anſwer. "Tell me, then," continued her mother, "what I am to think of your fainting away laſt night? For as to the heat of the room, *that* was only a feigned excuſe—What was it, therefore, that affected you?"

"I have not been well for ſome days Mamma," replied Emma with a faltering voice; "and laſt night I felt, all at once, extremely ſick and ill."

"I have heard your father often ſay, there is no effect without a cauſe; what, then, do you ſuppoſe occaſioned this ſudden indiſpoſition?"

"My dear Mamma," cried Emma, burſting into tears, "for Heaven's ſake ſpare me—urge me not—I cannot, no, it is impoſſible—I cannot anſwer your queſtions."

"Mighty

"Mighty well!—admirable!" ſaid Mrs. Mourtray, angrily: "however, let me adviſe you not to make yourſelf ridiculous: dry your tears, and come along with me to the Pump-room.—A little air, and change of ſcene, will do you good.—No excuſes; I will be obeyed."

As Emma could not ſoften her diſpleaſure by any explanation, ſhe was forced to ſubmit to her will.

Thoſe perſons, only, who have been in the unhappy predicament, of being dragged into public with a corroding anxiety in their heart, which ſome ſecret reaſon forces them to conceal, can form any conception of what Emma felt at this compulſion.

The only conſolation ſhe had, was the hope of hearing ſome tidings of Lord Miramont, from the voice of rumour; and Miſs Thornley, who accompanied

them, made it her buſineſs to enquire after this intereſting object. Preſently, ſhe ſaid, with a benevolent ſmile, addreſſing Mrs. Mourtray, but loud enough for Emma to hear her, "Though I am not acquainted with Lord Miramont, I am delighted to hear he is rather better this morning."

"Umph!" was the only anſwer ſhe received from Mrs. Mourtray; but Emma could not refrain from giving her a grateful look.

A whole week had now paſſed, during which time Emma would have ſunk into a ſtate of deſpair, had it not been for Miſs Thornley, who ſeemed to have entered into a tacit convention with her, conſtantly to communicate any good news ſhe heard of Lord Miramont, and as carefully to conceal the bad: never mingling with her intelligence any remarks,

marks, ſurmiſes, or alluſions, that might diſtreſs her.

At the end of this period, he became ſo much worſe than ever he had been, that his phyſicians nearly gave him over; and Miſs Thornley's ſilence, and melancholy countenance, too well prepared Emma, to expect the greateſt misfortune that, in her opinion, could befal her.

Unable any longer to ſtruggle with her feelings, ſhe abandoned herſelf to ſorrow: when, ſcarcely ſenſible what ſhe was doing, ſhe ſuddenly reſolved to go herſelf to the Hotel where the Marquis lodged, and learn from his ſervant the exact truth as to his ſituation. Without ſaying a word to any body, ſhe put on her cloak, and ruſhed into the ſtreet. At that inſtant ſhe ſaw Muller, Lord Miramont's ſervant, whom ſhe had often ſeen at Wilmington, advancing faſt towards her. She ſtopped; her trembling legs could ſcarcely

ſupport her, but her eyes remained fixed upon him.

She obſerved, however, nothing gloomy in his countenance; for, though he looked flurried, his eyes were lively and animated. He bowed reſpectfully as he approached, exclaiming—"Good news!—charming news, Madam!—my Lord is much better; and he ordered me to deliver this note into your own hands.—Should it require any anſwer, you will honour me with it as ſoon as poſſible, for I muſt haſten back to his Lordſhip."

Emma eagerly ſeized the note, but being unable to articulate, ſhe beckoned to Muller to follow her, and then, leaving him in the paſſage, ſhe flew to her chamber, where ſhe tore open the note, which only contained theſe lines.

"I SHALL live, my dear Miſs Mourtray. I am wonderfully relieved ſince laſt night. —My

—My phyſicians, however, will not let me write. Shew this to Mrs. Mourtray, and tell her, that my firſt viſit ſhall be to the mother of *her* whom I adore, and whom, as the moſt ineſtimable treaſure in this world, I hope ſhe will beſtow on,

" Your faithful, &c.

" MIRAMONT."

A torrent of tears bedewed this paper, as Emma read it: and immediately afterwards ſhe poured forth humble and truly pious effuſions of gratitude, to the Almighty, for ſparing the life of her lover.

Then taking a pen, ſhe wrote thus:

" NO language can expreſs my late ſorrow, or my preſent joy! Take care of your health, deareſt Lord Miramont, and remember, that Emma lives for you alone. The commiſſion you have given me to my mother, I will perform as ſoon as ſhe comes home: ſhe will, I am ſure, parti-

cipate in the pleaſure I feel at the amend-ment of your health. I will not detain your ſervant, therefore ſhall only add, that I am ever

" Your faithful
" EMMA MOURTRAY."

Mrs. Mourtray's abſence afforded her daughter time to compoſe her ſpirits, in ſome meaſure. With delight unutterable, ſhe repeated—" He will live!—yes, thank Heaven, he will; and he will live for me! —All difficulties now are over: for it is clear this obſtacle, whatever it was, is removed; elſe he would not have bidden me ſhew his note to my mother: and, though I underſtand what he means by ſaying, he is *wonderfully relieved*, this expreſſion cannot ſtrike her as particular, and ſhe will naturally attribute this relief to medical aid. How happy I am to be releaſed from the painful neceſſity of con-cealing my feelings; and the bliſs that awaits me, from my mother!—Oh! if my

dear

dear father were but here to ſhare in my joy, ſurely he would no longer object to Lord Miramont, who has forſaken Lady Fredville for my ſake. He has been at death's door, too, on my account.—That woman certainly held his deſtiny in her hands. Ah! why did he ever put himſelf thus in her power?—But I will not think of that: his future conduct, I truſt, will be exemplary; we ſhall be the happieſt of beings, and we will make others ſo: every creature near us ſhall be taken care of.—Poor Henry, if ever he be found, will never more want a friend; and dear Lord Miramont will reconcile him to the Silbournes. My French friends, oh! how delightful to make them forget, that they are baniſhed from their own country!"

Soft tears ſtole gently down her cheeks, while ſhe ſolaced herſelf with theſe and a thouſand other benevolent plans, which ſhe ſhould now have ſo amply the means

of executing, till Mrs. Mourtray's return turned her thoughts into another channel.

"Bleſs me, child!" exclaimed ſhe, as ſoon as ſhe ſaw her—"what is the matter with you?—your cheeks are as red as fire."

"My dear, dear Mamma," cried Emma, throwing herſelf upon her neck, "I longed ſo to ſee you!—I have ſomething to ſhew you."

"Well!—what—what does all this mean?"

Emma preſented her with the note; but it had not at all the effect ſhe expected.

"So! the grand ſecret is revealed," ſaid Mrs. Mourtray, drily:—"at laſt I am to be told of this affair, which, I ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe, has long been known to every body elſe!"

"Never, my dear mother, upon my word, has it, to my knowledge, been mentioned to a creature."

She then confeſſed, that Lord Miramont had acknowledged his partiality for her, at Wilmington; but that, for ſome reaſons, which he had not explained to her, he wiſhed his ſentiments to remain a ſecret for a little while; and now, as ſoon as a favourable turn had taken place in his late ſevere illneſs, he had haſtened to communicate his wiſhes to them both.

Mrs. Mourtray was not thoroughly ſatisfied with this explanation:—"I perceive," ſaid ſhe, "that I am more obliged to Lord Miramont than to you: his firſt thought is to have me informed of his propoſal; but you, my own child, have

have kept a ſecret buried in your boſom for weeks, and ſuffered me to hold a thouſand ridiculous diſputes with Colonel Thornley, when, all the while, you knew that I was deceived!—No, Emma, indeed, I did not think you could have ſerved me ſo!"

Mrs. Mourtray finiſhed theſe words with an emotion, that ſmote her daughter to the heart; and, in the humbleſt manner, ſhe beſought her pardon, proteſting how ſincerely ſhe loved and reſpected her.

Softened by her diſtreſs, Mrs. Mourtray took her hand; and Emma, preſſing it to her lips, aſſured her, that every idea of joy and happineſs faded, when ſhe ſaw her offended:—"Ah! blame me not," continued ſhe, "for what I could not help!—Could you but know half what I have ſuffered, when I dared not ſpeak,

you

you would—yes, I am ſure you would—forgive me."

Mrs. Mourtray loved her daughter too much, to retain her diſpleaſure any longer, and ſhe folded her tenderly in her arms. She now, as her good humour returned, began to exult in Emma's brilliant proſpect:—"Ah!" cried ſhe, "I always thought that ſweet face of your's would make your fortune; but, to be ſure, I never dreamed of ſuch a match as this for you. I thought Chowles would have been an excellent one; but what compariſon can be made between him, or even Lord Clannarmon, and the Marquis of Miramont."

"O! none, none!" thought Emma.

The mother and daughter, after a very long and intereſting converſation to them both, agreed that nothing ſhould tranſpire relative to Lord Miramont, till he had been

been to wait upon them; and that they would write, by the firſt mail, to Mr. Mourtray, without having any idea of waiting for his conſent, that being unneceſſary; as Mrs. Mourtray had been informed, by him, of the paper left in Emma's poſſeſſion.

The latter, juſt after her mother had left her, was ſurprized by a viſit from Miſs Thornley; who, affecting to tell her the news of the day, mentioned, amongſt other things, that Lord Miramont was conſiderably better; "But, I perceive," added ſhe, "you do not ſtand in need of my chit-chat to enliven you; for there is an uncommon brilliancy in your eyes to-day."

Emma coloured, and felt ſhe had ſo much cauſe, to be grateful for her good-natured attentions, that ſhe could not bear the idea of being too reſerved with her; therefore ſhe acknowledged that

Lord

Lord Miramont's amendment gave her no ſmall degree of ſatisfaction.

Mrs. Mourtray now ſent daily to enquire after him; and as the accounts were every day more and more favourable, her ſecret became ſo burthenſome to her, that it ſoon ceaſed to be any, ſo frequently did ſhe relieve herſelf by hints, which every body underſtood; and the Colonel now triumphed in his ſagacity.

As ſoon as the Marquis was ſuffered to go out, he haſtened to make his promiſed viſit, and it is needleſs to recount the reception he received. Both he and Emma were too much agitated, at firſt, to hold any connected diſcourſe; but when Mrs. Mourtray, for a ſhort time, left them alone, he ſlightly touched on the agonies he endured, when he deſpaired of ever calling her his own: theſe, he ſaid, had occaſioned his illneſs; which, he was perſuaded,

perſuaded, would have been fatal, if the cruel barrier between them had not ſuddenly, when he leaſt expected it, given way. Still he declined entering into any explanations, though he ſolemnly proteſted that he was free; and Emma, relying on this aſſurance, accepted, unreſervedly, his vows of eternal love and fidelity.

It was not till long after this period that Emma learned what the obſtacle had been, which occaſioned to them both ſo much miſery.

This circumſtance ſhall now be explained:—

During the firſt effervescence of Lord Miramont's culpable paſſion for Lady Fredville, ſome time before he had ſeen Emma, the former, one day, expreſſed great doubts and apprehenſions of the poſſibility of a man, ſo many years younger than herſelf, remaining long faithfully attached

ıttached to her. All he could ſay and ›roteſt ſeemed to make little impreſſion ›n her mind: " I firmly believe," ſaid he, " that you ſincerely feel, at preſent, *ll* that you ſay; but your friends and amily will perſuade you to marry: ſome ıew beauty will conquer your prejudices ıgainſt marriage; and I, who adore you, ınd who never can love any creature in he world but yourſelf, ſhall loſe you for ›ver !"

" What can I do to tranquillize you?" ried the Marquis.

Lady Fredville pretended to be ab›rbed in thought:—at length, ſtarting, ıe exclaimed, " Yes, this will do; give ıe a ſolemn oath that you never will ıarry without my conſent, and ſhall feel erfectly eaſy and ſatisfied."

" Oh! that I will do, willingly," replied ›rd Miramont, ſmiling; " and I will do

do more; for I will give you, in writin
a promiſe to this effect, which you ſha
draw up yourſelf, and I will ſign it;-
though all theſe precautions are very u
neceſſary; for, independant of my ſen
ments for you, I have an averſion even
the thoughts of marrying."

The oath was taken, and the promi
ſigned, ſealed, and delivered to La
Fredville.

In the courſe of a few months, L
Miramont ſaw Emma—admired, a
gradually became partial to her; gr
tired of Lady Fredville, and repented
his promiſe.

They had repeated quarrels and rec
ciliations.—One day he vowed neve
ſee her more, and the next he was at
feet: ſuch was her art, and his we
neſs!—At length, without ſaying a w
to her of his intention, he ſuddenly
t

with Lord Fontelieu. This ſhe re-
d highly, but kept her indignation
rſelf.

ter his declaration to Emma, when
ft Wilmington in ſuch haſte, he re-
d to go to Lady Fredville, and can-
tell her, that reflection had con-
:d him, that, for many reaſons, be-
being the laſt of his family, he ought
ıarry, and entreat her to cancel his
ıiſe.

e knew that this would be the moſt
y method of prevailing upon her to
quiſh it; for that ſhe would be
ıus, if ſhe heard of any attachment
he had formed. Once releaſed from
obligation, he intended to break this
:er to her.

n his arrival, though ſhe received
very coldly, he was not diſcouraged;
made his requeſt calmly; ſtating his
reaſons

reaſons for marrying; and repreſenting, that, as the paper in her hands could be of no uſe to her, he truſted to her generoſity for reſtoring that, and releaſing him from his oath.

She heard him with indignation; a violent ſcene enſued, and they ſeparated in diſguſt. Nevertheleſs, he called upon her the day following, when, by degrees, ſhe became more placable; for ſhe had reflected, that, by diſobliging, ſhe ſhould loſe him entirely; whereas, in the contrary caſe, ſhe might have a chance of retaining his friendſhip; and, perhaps, hereafter (inconſtant as he was) of ſupplanting his wife.

She, therefore, amuſed him with hopes; artfully, however, trying to diſcover who the perſon was, that had ſuddenly inſpired him with theſe matrimonial projects; but ſhe found him impenetrable.

In

the interval between this viſit and
ext, Lord Fredville was taken ex-
ly ill: this did not prevent his wife
ſeeing Lord Miramont; when, to
reat diſappointment, he found her
ſition totally changed, and ſhe coldly
d entering upon the ſubject in
ion.

r huſband's illneſs, which increaſed
ly, had given quite another turn to
houghts: ſhould he die, ſhe might
y the Marquis herſelf; therefore, to
mportunities (as ſoon as Lord Fred-
was given over) ſhe returned the
abſolute and peremptory refuſal;
as exterior decency gave her a pre-
for declining to ſee him, he had no
r any opportunities of trying, to
n her obduracy.

e annoyed her, however, with letters,
hich ſhe ſent no anſwer.

At length, after Lord Fredville was dead and buried, and her doors open again, with all due decorum, to her intimate friends, he forced himſelf into her preſence. She affected a tender melancholy, ſuitable to her ſituation; and even ſo far commanded herſelf as to liſten, with apparent calmneſs, to the renewal of the prohibited ſubject: after which ſhe told him, with a ſoft ſmile, that circumſtances having altered very much ſince the opening of this buſineſs, he muſt excuſe her enabling him to give that hand to another, which ſhe hoped he would, in proper time, offer to that perſon, whoſe tenderneſs gave her the beſt claim to it; and to whoſe reputation, injured by him, he owed all the reparation in his power.

Lord Miramont liſtened, with a ſarcaſtic ſmile;—"What was loſt by *that perſon*, Madam?" ſaid he:—"when I was yet a child, it is as impoſſible I can ever reſtore,

ſtore, as that I ſhould make myſelf ſo ridiculous as to accept the honour deſigned me. Had her conduct been different, I might have remembered my attachment without regret:—now, I only think of it with deteſtation."

He then quitted her inſtantly; but, when the anger that her aſſurance had provoked ſubſided, he repented having thus exaſperated, inſtead of ſoothing her; and again he had recourſe to prayers and entreaties, which ſhe rejected with ſcorn and defiance.

Deſperate, then, he flung himſelf into his chaiſe, and hurried down to Bath, where he thought the ſight of his beloved Emma would afford ſome mitigation to his ſorrows.—His illneſs denied him this relief.

Never having, in his life, experienced the ſlighteſt contradiction, his heart now

ſwelled with every turbulent paſſion.—Rage, love, hatred, and diſappointment, ſet his blood into the moſt violent fermentation: ſevere medical diſcipline cooled this; but deſpair had taken ſuch poſſeſſion of his mind, that he ſeemed ſinking under it.

In the mean while Lady Fredville, who had followed him to Bath, was little leſs agitated herſelf; for, the ſame Phyſician attending both, ſhe heard of him conſtantly. One moment, pitying his deplorable condition, ſhe almoſt determined no longer to be inexorable: the next, ſhe endeavoured to perſuade herſelf, that his illneſs was accidental, and that ſhe was not anſwerable for it. Yet Doctor G—— perſiſting in his aſſertion, that the ſeat of it was in his mind, again made her waver; for ſhe well knew, that ſhe alone could reſtore him to tranquillity; but, then, as ſhe muſt renounce thoſe agreeable projects, which ſhe ſtill flattered herſelf

erſelf might yet ſucceed, ſhe heſitated; ill his imminent danger wrought ſo upon er fears, that they decided her reſolu-ion.

She ſent, therefore, in great haſte, for Doctor G——; and, giving him a ſealed paper, ſhe requeſted he would carry it nſtantly to the Marquis; adding, that it would do him more good than all his preſcriptions.

The Doctor found his patient ex-remely ill, but perfectly ſenſible: he re-uſed to take Lady Fredville's letter, till e heard the ſpeech which accompanied he delivery of it: then he eagerly opened it, and found the paper containing his fatal promiſe torn in two.

This ſight operated like magic: he ſlept that night, for the firſt time during the laſt week; and how ſpeedily after-wards he recovered has already been

 mentioned.

mentioned. As ſoon as Lady Fredville heard Doctor G—— pronounce him out of danger ſhe left Bath.

The intended marriage now was openly declared, and announced to all Lord Miramont's family.

Mrs. Mourtray could not contain her raptures; expatiating to her friend, the Colonel, (who, as well as his family, ſhared in her joy) on Lord Miramont's high rank, great connections, and, above all, on his fortune, which ſhe valued far the moſt.

Though this her imagination, aſſiſted by his generoſity to herſelf, magnified exceedingly; for it was (conſidering his ſtation) by no means large.

Nevertheleſs he acted nobly concerning ſettlements; for he directed his lawyers to aſſign to Emma the ſame jointure as his father had ſettled on his mother.

While

While the preparations were making for the approaching event, and that Mrs. Mourtray was living in a perpetual buſtle, Lord Miramont paſſed the chief part of each day, delightfully, with Emma. As Lady Fredville was now gone, and that his health was quickly reſtored, every circumſtance conſpired to render her completely happy: her mind being now relieved from conſtraint, ſorrow, and anxiety, the vivid bloom of youth again glowed in her cheeks, and ſhe re-aſſumed her natural gaiety.

She had written to Lady Wilmington, to whom ſhe thought ſhe owed this mark of reſpect, to announce the honour ſhe hoped to have, of ſhortly belonging to her family.

The anſwer ſhe received to her letter was not abſolutely ungracious, though cold; for Lady Wilmington, well as ſhe liked Emma as a companion, was not

pleaſed that ſhe ſhould become her niece, deeming none but perſons of the higheſt rank worthy of that honour: however, as ſhe could not prevent this, ſhe reſolved, on account of her nephew, to keep with her on terms of civility.

Lady Elizabeth felt too much mortification at Emma's good fortune to write to her on this occaſion; and ſhe was, at that time, in particular ill humour, as Sir Harry continued to procraſtinate.

As it was ſettled that the nuptial ceremony ſhould be performed at Bath, by Lord Miramont's chaplain, it took place accordingly, about the middle of January. Colonel Thornley, to his great delight, had the honour of acting as father to the bride on this occaſion.

Immediately afterwards, the new-married couple ſet out for Highwood (Lord Miramont's ſeat, in Suſſex), whence they purpoſed,

purpoſed, after a month's ſtay, to repair to London, where Mrs. Mourtray, who could, in the mean while, afford to remain at Bath, promiſed to join them, and become their gueſt for three or four months.

Lord Miramont, amongſt other preſents, had given her three very fine coach horſes, which contributed not a little to put him in her good graces.

Happy as were all parties, the mother and daughter did not ſeparate without ſhedding tears, and the former continued, for ſome time, in a wild hurry of ſpirits; but, when theſe calmed, ſhe looked forward to the pleaſure of ſhortly ſeeing the Marchioneſs of Miramont; and truſted that her fate, would reſemble that of thoſe imaginary heroines, whoſe hiſtory uſually terminates with words to this effect, *and they were married, and lived happy.*

Lord

Lord and Lady Miramont had not proceeded far on their journey, when the poſtillions, having taken a cheering cup too much, in honour of their Lord's nuptials, were inſpired with ſuch extraordinary ſpirits, that, in whiſking round a ſharp angle, they overſet the carriage, and the axle-tree broke.

Neither Lord Miramont nor Emma was much hurt, but one of the horſes beginning to kick at a furious rate, their ſituation, really became very dangerous; eſpecially as one of the drivers had been jerked off his horſe, and the other ſeemed ſtupified with fright and liquor.

At that inſtant a poſt-chaiſe came near the ſpot, and a gentleman immediately leaped out of it, followed by his ſervant, to aſſiſt in containing the fury of the reſtive animal. The carriage was now diſengaged from the horſes, and Lord Miramont,

mont, having ſcrambled out of it, aſſiſted Lord Clannarmon (for it was him) to lift Emma thence.

The terror ſhe had ſuffered had nearly deprived her of ſenſe; but no ſooner did ſhe find herſelf ſafe, than, raiſing her eyes to ſee to whom ſhe was obliged, ſhe beheld Lord Clannarmon! Pale as Death he looked; ſeeming almoſt to want, himſelf, the ſupport he was affording her.

She immediately felt what his ſenſations muſt be at that moment. The circumſtances in which he found her, and the favours on the ſervants hats, muſt have informed him of her marriage; and ſhe ſincerely regretted the unlucky chance which had thrown him in her way.

She attempted, however, to make her acknowledgments for the kind aſſiſtance he had given, but, affected by the deep dejection

dejection in his air, her voice faltered as ſhe ſpoke.

Lord Miramont who had no idea of what was paſſing in Lord Clannarmon's mind, frankly thanked him for his attentions, and gave him a very cordial invitation to Highwood.

Lord Clannarmon bowed; made an effort to ſay ſomething civil; but he ſpoke unintelligibly. As no perſon ever cared leſs about forms and ceremonies than the Marquis, he did not obſerve that the other had made him no congratulations, nor, that there was any thing extraordinary in his behaviour; but he ſaw that he was much altered, and concluded, he was unwell.

It was now ſettled, that Lord and Lady Miramont ſhould proceed on their journey in Lord Clannarmon's carriage; the latter

latter inſiſting upon their taking it: therefore, after conducting Emma, with a trembling hand, and placing her in his chaiſe, he bowed to Lord Miramont, and, mounting one of the ſervant's horſes, he rode on to the next ſtage, while they purſued their route; leaving the diſabled chaiſe to the care of their ſervants.

Emma, who had too clearly ſeen the perturbation of Lord Clannarmon's mind, was ſo diſturbed by it, that it was ſome time before ſhe could recover her tranquillity.

The report of her intended marriage had, almoſt as ſoon as the event was ſettled, reached Lord Clannarmon's ears; but he was ignorant when it would take place.

Little did he think, on his return from Brighthelmſtone, whither he had been, to try,

try, by change of ſcene, to diſſipate the anguiſh of his ſoul, that he ſhould be ſo unfortunate, as to meet the happy Marquis carrying home his lovely bride.

This ſhock totally bereft him of all fortitude; and when he reached his houſe at Wheatley, had not Fitzaubert exerted himſelf to ſooth and conſole him, he would have ſunk a martyr to love and deſpair.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.